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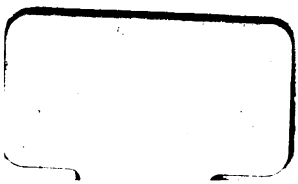

MEMOIRS

OF MADAME

DE STAAL-DE LAUNAY

VOLUME FIRST

EDITION JOUAUST

NEW-YORK, 1892

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VOLUME FIRST

NEW-YORK, M DCCC XCII

PARIS

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Rue de Lille, 7

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Mme DE STAAL-DE LAUNAY

MEMOIRS

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

WITH FORTY ONE ETCHINGS

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VOLUME FIRST

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

7713

BY

CORA HAMILTON BELL

WITH FORTY ONE ETCHINGS

BY

AD. LALAUZE

VOLUME FIRST

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME FIRST

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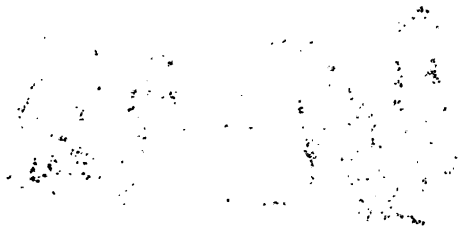
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

An attempt has been made to cast the translation of these Memoirs into the more formal English of the early part of the Eighteenth Century in the hope of thereby preserving some of the charm and quaintness of the French original. The use of many now antiquated expressions also made a more literal translation possible as the two languages bore a closer resemblance to one another than they do at present.

C. H. B.

THE TALK WITH Mlle DE SILLY



MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME DE STAAL

I [illegible] myself that [illegible]
will [illegible] worthy the [illegible]
read, if I take the trouble to [illegible], it is
merely to amuse myself with the memory of
[illegible] which have interested me.

In [illegible] one sees the [illegible] traced in a
[illegible] manner, turn out to be [illegible] pro-
[illegible] with the [illegible] [illegible]

MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME DE STAAL

I do not flatter myself that the events of my life will ever be worthy the attention of any one; and, if I take the trouble to write them down, it is merely to amuse myself with the memory of things which have interested me.

In romances one sees the heroine, reared as a simple shepherdess, turn out to be a noble princess; with me just the reverse has happened. In

my childhood I was treated like a person of distinction, only to discover later that I was nobody and that I possessed nothing. My spirit, not having early taken the bent which bad fortune would have given it, has always resented the low estate and the servitude in which I have found myself; and from this arises the unhappiness of my life.

My father, for some reason which I have never known, was forced to leave France and establish himself in England. My mother being young and a fine woman, her spiritual directors roused her scruples against living so far from her husband, and she followed him; but, finding a foreign climate disagreeable, she soon returned to France and gave birth to me in Paris. Destitute of the means of support, she sought and found a retreat in the abbey of Saint-Sauveur, at Évreux, in Normandy. Madame de La Rochefoucauld, who was abbess, received her without dowry at the entreaty of certain of her friends; and, when it became necessary to take me from my nurse, she permitted my mother to fetch me and received me with her into the convent.

A little before that time King Louis XIV had attempted to arrogate to himself the appointments to the Urbanist abbeys; the Pope opposed this, and, the dispute being lengthy, the nuns

appointed to these abbeys, having started to take possession of them, were for the most part reluctant to return to their homes, and sought an asylum in other convents while awaiting the result.

Among these postulants, Mesdames de Grieu, of the abbey of Jouarre, had taken refuge at Saint-Sauveur, where my mother struck up a great friendship with them; and, when she returned bringing me with her, these ladies took a great liking to me at first sight. Their lack of employment in a strange house gave them a sense of tedium, which made them seize upon the first object that presented itself; and they adored me with the vehemence which loneliness and idleness impart to every sentiment.

I was a little more than two years old, and already chattered in a way that passed for clever, my age being considered. I gained the good graces of the abbess by an incident almost too childish to repeat. She was a sister of the Duc de La Rochefoucauld, famous for his wit, and had herself not a little; but wit does not hinder one from having idiosyncracies; it but renders them more odd. She had established in her lodging an asylum for sick dogs; the lame and the incurable filled her apartments : some suffered from falling-sickness, others were covered with mange; she took no care for those which were well and

hearty, certain that they would find sufficient for their needs elsewhere.

I was often in her rooms with the Mesdames de Grieu. I happened one day, as we were placing ourselves at table, to tread carelessly on the paw of one of these unfortunates, who made a loud outcry. The abbess changed countenance and appeared so much annoyed that some one whispered to me that I must ask pardon. I left the table, and, as if I knew not that it was she whom I had offended, dropped on my knees in the middle of the room, before the wounded dog, to whom I addressed a most feeling apology. This trick succeeded and placed me high in her esteem. The Marquise de Silleri, her sister, and Mesdames de Saint-Poin and de Boisfévrier, her nieces, all women of notable wit, amused themselves in entertaining me. Certainly I was more intelligent and rational than is common at that age. I may say this without conceit, since one sees children, who have passed for prodigies of cleverness, grow to be prodigies of stupidity.

This fortunate disposition was cultivated by all the instruction of which my tender years were susceptible. I lived only with my elders; which conduces to a rational turn of mind. They had enough learning to explain everything that I wished to know. One query answered gave birth

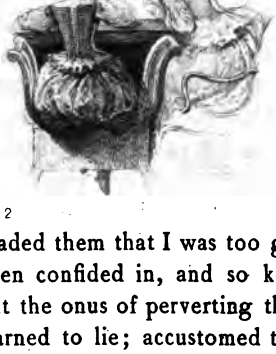
to another; I was perpetually asking questions and always received a reply. In lieu of wearying me with *Peau d'Ane,* they filled my head with the beginnings of history, sacred and profane, in which I became so well versed as to quote appositely. The success of my education made those who concerned themselves with it more enamoured of me than ever. They pledged my mother to leave me entirely in their hands.

As Madame la Duchesse de Ventadour was desirous of having my mother as governess for her only daughter, she accepted the position on advantageous and honourable terms; but her excessive piety, inconsistent with this new course of life, and even more so with the inclinations of her pupil, induced her to leave without waiting for the marriage of Mademoiselle de Ventadour, which took place soon afterward to the Prince de Turenne.

At the end of a year my mother returned to the convent, where she had left me with these ladies, who had taken possession of me, and were so much attached to me that they did not wish to surrender me on her return; they looked upon me as their own child and devoted themselves entirely to my education.

This lively friendship made them desire a position which would give them the means of doing

more for me; they exerted what influence they had at court to obtain an abbey. This was long talked of before it came about. I prophesied that it would not occur until I was seven years old. Idiots and children often prophesy because they talk so much at random. A great deal of stir is caused in a convent when a nun becomes an abbess. The measures employed to this end are scrutinized severely by everybody. The endeavours of Mesdames de Grieu raised suspicions, and, as it was understood that they concealed nothing from me, I was questioned; I answered idly, talked of my doll, and in fine persuaded them that I was too great a baby to have been confided in, and so kept my secret without the onus of perverting the truth. I had never learned to lie; accustomed to find an excuse for my faults in the confession of them, I had no reason for prevarication. The majority of children become cheats and liars because of the severity and restraint exercised toward them.



Madame de Grieu, the elder of the two sisters, was at length appointed to the priory of Saint-Louis at Rouen; soon after she and her sister left for that place and took me with them with the consent of my mother, who, being at a loss where to bestow herself, was delighted to be rid of me. These ladies halted at the house of a brother of theirs, who resided on a pretty estate in that part of the country. I was charmed to see new things; the world widened before my gaze. I was still more delighted to arrive at Saint-Louis. Shortly after, I was apprised of the death of my father, who had remained in England. I had never seen him, and I am not sure that I believed I had one, none the less I shed tears for him; I do not recall whence they came.

This convent of Saint-Louis was like a little kingdom where I ruled despotically. The abbess and her attendants had no thought save to anticipate my wishes and gratify my fantasies. I was housed in her lodging, which was pleasant and comfortable. Four persons, either nuns or lay-sisters, devoted to my service, were sufficiently occupied by the multiplicity of my demands; one desires many things when one is denied nothing. The nieces of the abbess, whom she kept with her out of consideration for her family, were, though much against their will, complaisant to my inclinations, for the whole household found itself under

the necessity of paying me a kind of court. As every one whom I saw bowed before me, it never occured to me that I should feel any gratitude, nor did I, even toward those ladies whose blind affection had built me this tiny empire.

The allowance which they received from their family was employed in paying my instructors and in giving me every thing I needed or desired. They denied themselves everything that I might want for nothing. In truth I loved them tenderly, yet was not aware how much I was in their debt. That which they did for me cost me so little that it seemed to be in the order of nature; it is only our efforts to obtain an object that teach us its worth. In a word, although infinitely insignificant, I had acquired all the faults of the great; this has often since helped me to excuse their defects and has enabled me to see how easy it is for any person to persuade himself that the whole world was made for him alone.

The extreme leniency with which my foibles were treated would have permitted them to degenerate into vices, had it not been, fortunately, that I came of good blood, and if the piety to which I gave myself up from my tenderest years had not repressed my budding passions before they made any great progress. Religion was the one great object that I had before my eyes; I was deeply

versed in it, and my mind was so precocious that I was admitted to the participation of the most Holy Sacraments before I had attained my eighth year. This premature growth in grace augmented my fervour. I loved reading; in the convent library there were none but books pertaining to the church; these I read continually, and the rest of my time was passed in prayer and meditation. They feared lest this might impair my health, which was very delicate, and sought to repress my zeal. Constraint, which until then had been unknown to me, but fanned my ardour. I used to slip away to devote to spiritual exercises the hours which every one supposed were employed in recreation. Beside all this, I applied myself to certain lighter studies. These I continued for several years with so much earnestness that, begrudging the time needful for

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other affairs, I caused my hair to be cut off in order the sooner to be dressed; it was singularly long and it was the custom then to wear it so. Women set even greater value on their charms than on their passions; that which I felt for study did not prevent my repenting of my sacrifice. Then I learned that we may feel regret. This knowledge cooled my desire to become a nun. Until then I had looked forward to that event with impatience. I began to foresee the consequences of a pledge which I could not break; and from that moment till the age when I should have taken the veil, my vocation so sensibly abated that it hardly ever entered my thoughts.

There were pupils in the convent much more advanced in years than I : I made friends with several of them; this diverted me in some degree from my more serious occupations. They lent me romances, and the impression made by these on my mind was so lively that I have never since been so deeply moved by my own adventures as I was by the exploits of those fabulous personages. The great liberty accorded me did not preclude a watch being kept on my actions; and, as I sought to conceal nothing, it was easy to know what I did. Consequently they became aware of this dangerous reading and they told me that I must abandon it. I obeyed so implicitly that, being in the midst of an incident which caused me much concern, I would

not learn the ending, and withstood every temptation offered to me to finish it in secret. I have done few things that cost me so much. Nevertheless I apprehended forcibly the nature of the passions, and the sentiments which go to the making of them crept into my heart though as yet without a definite object.

Mademoiselle de Silly whom I, in my infancy, had seen at Saint-Sauveur, where she had passed some time, came to live at Saint-Louis. She was a very engaging person, of excellent and agreeable parts, more determined by her judgments than by her sentiments, and of a sensible and decided character. I devoted myself to her with all the liveliness of a first attachment. I studied only to please her; her tastes became mine; she loved reading, in her company I read the whole day. I had not at that time found any books which either aroused or gratified my curiosity. I have since often deplored the loss of those five or six years, the most valuable for the erudition of the mind, which I passed without learning anything but the accomplishments usually taught to young girls, such as music, dancing, playing the harpsichord; for all of these I had neither taste nor talent and made no progress.

The abbess and her sister had given me all the instruction by which a child could be benefited, but they did not possess the necessary qualifica-

tions to aid my further advancement; and I had come to a standstill when Mademoiselle de Silly opened a new field to me. She applied herself to a study of the philosophy of Descartes; I threw myself into the undertaking with great pleasure. I read subsequently with her the "Search after Truth" and became enamoured of the author's system. In order to verify my understanding of any question, I strove to foresee the effects of the principles involved, which I rarely failed in grasping; this made me believe that I understood it. It may be that a mind, entirely fresh and unencumbered with any opinion, apprehends abstract ideas more easily than one already filled with various ideas likely to embarrass one another. It is also true that our passion for knowledge is stronger before we have experienced that of another kind, and our attention more undivided at an age when no cares and responsibilities distract it.

I took so much pleasure in this imagined discovery of the truth that I could not bear to be diverted from it. Entertainment, ordinary society, everything displeased me but my pursuit and conversation concerning it. However, by force of thinking, I arrived at certain ideas that disquieted me. I feared that philosophy might undermine my faith, that metaphysics might be a pabulum too strong for a mind not yet capable of properly di-

gesting it; at the very height of my enthusiasm I resolved on putting away the object of it until I could give myself up to its pursuit without danger. This sacrifice cost me infinite pains; but I had accustomed myself early to do violence to my desires and to decide against my inclinations in any thing which seemed to me doubtful, being persuaded that error was less likely to result from such a course of action than from the opposite.

Mademoiselle de Silly, whom I consulted, approved of my discretion. No thought entered my mind which I did not communicate to her. I loved her as one loves oneself, and even more, as it seemed to me. I would gladly have borne the ills that were in store for her, in order that she might be spared; in short, I went so far as to feel aversion for certain persons because they seemed to cherish greater consideration and liking for me than for her.

This first affection, extravagant though it was, did not prevent my experiencing a slight attack of a more usual sentiment. The brother of the abbess, in company with his niece, and a man who was paying his addresses to this niece, came to pass some time near the convent. This was a novel sight for me. I discerned the understanding between these two at the first words they spoke in my presence, though what they said was of the

most indifferent complexion. I was proud of this discovery, and, wishing to follow it up, watched their actions with an attention that was greater than simple curiosity. I entertained Mademoiselle de Silly with my observations, and she, having had more experience than I, knew from the first the kind of interest I took in the affair. She did not wish to enlighten my ignorance, for it often happens that we disparage a sentiment when we do not know its nature and it dies of itself, whereas one that we are afraid of, and undertake to combat, impresses our imagination more strongly and cannot be so easily effaced.

However, the melancholy into which I fell on the departure of this company apprised me that I had been affected by the charms of the Chevalier de R..., who was the chief personage. His figure, all that he had said, even his pieces for the lute, which he executed admirably, remained graven on my mind. I confided to Mademoiselle de Silly the distress I was in. She confessed she had perceived it before, advised me to give myself no uneasiness and not to search my heart too curiously, believing that an evil is often augmented by the attention one bestows on it. In truth I was embellishing with imaginary sentiments, drawn from romances, whatever there was of substance in this first prepossession, which verily was not strong

since it could not stand against the idea of an indissoluble union. Mademoiselle de Silly used this fact adroitly to cure me of what she judged to be only a fancy. She suggested this result as a possibility; I was at first amazed; I considered it seriously; and, after passing the whole night in great agitation, I found, on waking, the charm vanished, my mind more composed, my heart free; and I thought no more of the adventure but to laugh at it with Mademoiselle de Silly, who had come to my aid so seasonably. A long time afterward I saw this personage again, divested of the qualities my imagination had lent him. I hardly recognized him, nothing remained of that which had impressed me but his remarkable skill on the lute and the guitar.

Before this slight trial of my feelings, I had inspired sufficiently lively sentiments in a man of excellent parts, whom some legal formalities obliged to come to the convent several days in succession. He conversed with me for some time and was surprised to find a girl of thirteen or fourteen

possessed of accomplishments unusual to that age. M. Brunel (such was his name) wished to secure some intercourse with me, and, in order to accomplish this, importuned Mademoiselle de Silly, already highly pleased with his discourse, to condescend to allow him to visit her. She granted his request willingly, and, as we were inseparable, he saw me at the same time. He put himself, little by little, upon the footing of coming every day to pass the hour after dinner in our parlour and discovered a sort of gallantry which was divided equally between Mademoiselle de Silly and myself. I saw clearly, however, that the balance dipped on my side; and of the verses which he composed for us those which he addressed to me were the more tender and unaffected: here are some which he wrote to me on the beginning of the century, a sufficiently long time ago to remember.

TO DORIS

What things shall I say to thee
Today when year and century both onward move?
Let who will vow an hundred years of constancy;
From day to day I shift my love.
Thousand and thousand other days in turn succeed;
To pledge them were a fallacy indeed.
On wings of Time such promises take flight.
These centuries to one day recede:
More faith I keep than e'er I plight.

I derived infinite entertainment from this companionship. M. Brunel possessed exquisite sensibility and all the accomplishments that can adorn the mind; he wanted nothing save those graces which can only be acquired by commerce with the great world, and which are, nevertheless, more likely to please than more material advantages. I had no prepossession in his favour, but I was flattered by that he shewed for me. Our first and last conquests are those which are most agreeable to us. When we are very young, it is much that we should please so early, and it is more to please when we are on the wane. This affair engaged my attention without touching my heart; I was curious to discern what M. Brunel thought of me, but, if he happened to declare himself too openly, if he seemed to pretend to any encouragement, I was sensible of an aversion to him, so true is it that the heart rebels against all demands it does not of itself anticipate. But, indifferent as M. Brunel was to me, I was piqued on learning that he had a mistress in whose company he passed a part of his time. This discovery excited my imagination in so eminent a degree as to produce the first verses I ever wrote. They were of an ironical turn, without form or measure, for I did not know how to write poetry. He made answer to me gallantly in the following lines:

PORTRAIT OF DORIS

If I be tangled in Love's snare
Or not, let doubts no more your mind assail;
For I shall put an end, fair Doris, to your care;
But by your charms you first must swear
To let my arguments prevail.

In a retreat secluded and apart,
Where indolence and gentle languor reign,
The Gods, on mischief bent, did once impart
A mien demure, and Beauty's subtlest art,
While wit and youth as jealous rivals strain,
And Taste and Elegance are seen,
Nor Pride nor Spleen these graces thwart.
Such rare commingled virtues Love himself would move:
In seeing you these varied traits I see;
Now ask me when you will if I 'm in love.

My anger was pacified; my jealousy was not aroused; nor any of the humours that attend on passion, which, to say the truth, I did not feel for the man in question. The tie existing between us lasted to the end of his life, which event occurred a short time after my leaving the provinces. It occasioned in me a grief which still endures and will never cease.

Mademoiselle de Silly, my inseparable friend, was obliged to make a journey to Paris. Her absence, though of short duration, cast me into a depression of spirits such as I had never known.

I had recourse to a new occupation in order to rouse me from the lethargic dullness into which her departure threw me. I had experienced in my early studies an inconvenience from not knowing a little geometry, and had retained a wish to acquire some tincture of it. Urged now by the necessity of occupying my mind with something that would entirely absorb it, I settled upon this. I threw myself therefore into this study, and gained from it a profitable diversion. The best means of fortifying the mind against misfortune is not in combating the object that occasions it, but in presenting others that will insensibly withdraw and distract our thoughts from the contemplation of it. Long afterward I reaped the benefit of this observation under very different circumstances.

The convent of Saint-Louis was almost ruined when Madame de Grieu was made abbess; a famine that laid waste France a few years afterward reduced it to extreme straits. The nuns, insufficiently nourished, watched with discontent the disbursements for me, which they believed were made to some extent at their expense. The abbess and her sister received an allowance from their family, but the others were persuaded that it was not sufficient for the maintenance of the nieces of these ladies, and still less for all that

they did for me. I became the object of murmurings; intrigues were set afoot, and went so far as to beget in M. Colbert, Archbishop of Rouen, the purpose of suppressing the convent, or at least of obliging the abbess to leave. He made a visit, listened to the complaints and arrived at the conclusion that it was necessary for Madame de Grieu to resign her abbacy or part with her nieces and myself. It was only by resolute contemplation of abstract subjects that I was enabled to control the agitation of my mind during an interval of waiting for this decree, which reduced me to the last extremity. I believe it would be easy to make use of this remedy habitually, if we began at an early age, and that we should spare ourselves by this means the futile torments of anxiety.

After the Archbishop's visit I was apprised of his decision. The abbess and her sister were in despair. Their grief hindered me from feeling my own. At length, having consulted with me and with Mademoiselle de Silly, who had long since returned to Saint-Louis, on the course they should take, the abbess decided to resign the temporal administration of the convent, after having presented her accounts to prove the rectitude of her government, engaging to live with her sister, her nieces and myself, on the pension

which she had from her family, without drawing on her benefice. This was the safest expedient for keeping me near her without rousing the suspicion that it was at the charge of the convent; but many negotiations were necessary before she could effect her object. The Archbishop had appointed a Superior; this was the Abbé de Gouey; he wrote incessantly to the abbess; it was necessary to reply to him and to write many other letters which occasioned her extreme embarrassment. She entrusted me with this task; I believe my desire to succeed taught me to write with the skill requisite in treating affairs of this nature; these letters were commended by some gentlemen who were her advisers; her request was granted, I remained with her, and no one tormented her farther.

Several years passed thus, tranquilly enough. I had the misfortune to be separated at last from Mademoiselle de Silly, who returned to her father's house, a château in lower Normandy. This occasioned me deep affliction and left a great blank in my life. My passion for study had abated after my discovery that the truth which we seek vanishes at the moment we fancy we have grasped it. I still loved reading as an agreeable and improving pastime, but no longer endowed it with advantages it did not possess. And every

passion languishes from the moment we see the object of it in its true light.

I had the small-pox shortly after the departure of Mademoiselle de Silly; I was as ill as it is possible to be without dying. I was concerned neither for my life nor for my appearance, so little worthy of consideration; I was conscious only of the distemper. This did not prevent my taking care that I should be removed in order that no one might be exposed. I had already learned that in ethics, as in geometry, the whole is greater than its parts. I prepared myself willingly for death. When I was restored, I was so weak as to be fearful of looking at my face, little vain as I was of it; and it was not till the end of three or four months that I encountered it with surprise, having lost all notion of it. The women who set the smallest store by their charms, and who seem to be the most indifferent to them, prize them much more highly than they imagine.

I gave myself up to society the more readily after I had become less enamoured of reading. I formed a very agreeable friendship with the Mesdemoiselles d'Épinay, who came to live for a time at Saint-Louis, and who made me promise when they left to visit them at the house of an aunt with whom they resided. They had an uncle, a maker of indifferent verses; he addressed some to

me; I replied in kind. M. de Rey, a friend of these ladies, honoured me with a particular regard; I was touched, as one always is when one pleases; but what I learned later of the generosity of his sentiments made me esteem him prodigiously.

My abbess fell dangerously ill, and her disorder gave me occasion to make some melancholy reflections on my situation. I possessed nothing and she could leave me nothing. I saw no other alternative but to become a nun, and I had lost all inclination for that; moreover, in order to be admitted, I should be forced to accept the offer of a dowry made me by a lady to whom I had no wish to be so indebted: for the abbess of Saint-Louis was not possessed of sufficient authority in the convent to have me received without dower, nor did the condition of the establishment admit of any such proposition.

One day when I was considering these thoughts and talking of them to the Mesdemoiselles d'Épinay, who displayed such an interest in me as to merit my confidence, M. de Rey entered and interrupted our discourse. He perceived the trouble I was in, and when I was gone he pressed them to tell him what we were speaking of. They confided to him my purpose of entering a nunnery because of my lack of fortune. He was extremely affected

by this news and came to see me the following day. He told me that he had been made acquainted with my resolution; he conjured me not to make myself unhappy for my whole life, but rather to lend myself to what he wished to do for me; that being married he could not offer me his hand, but that he would settle upon me a sum sufficient for me to live in a manner pleasing to me, and in any place I might choose; that, to prove he expected to obtain no favour for the services he had the will and the power to render me, he would promise never to see me if I exacted that condition. I was amazed at this proposal and saw nothing clearly but the refusal I must give. Neither my ideas nor my sentiments at that period were governed with proper moderation. A little more and I should have been offended by an action that has since seemed to me well worthy of my respect and gratitude, although I have never changed my opinion as to the course I had to take.

The abbess happily recovered from her illness, and I resolved to consider no more what was to become of me, until I was deprived of the resources of her friendship.

I received from yet another quarter some generous overtures which I looked upon with the same disdain. M. Brunel had introduced to me one of his friends, the abbé de Vertot, who was on his

way through Rouen. He was a man of a very lively imagination. I do not know in what light he regarded me, but from the first he was carried away by a violent fancy for me. He discoursed of my merit to the booksellers from whom he bought books. As I did not mistrust the interest which I saw he took in all that concerned me, I talked to him without scruple of my situation and of my lack of means for the future. This made him conceive the project of settling on me and on himself a sum of money which he wished to place in an annuity. He disclosed it to some of my friends who advised me to accept of it. This I declined to do. I had at an early age resigned myself to poverty, and I found less inconvenience in this than in laying myself under suspected obligations. I recognized later in the abbé all the signs of a passion, especially in the opinion he held of my perfections. I often said to him, when he was portraying me to myself with all the qualities lent me by his brilliant imagination: "Some day you will see me as I am, and you will be greatly surprised." His assiduity, although restrained by the decorum becoming to his cloth and age, as well as by that deference which a sincere desire to please always prompts, was yet too uncommon not to hurt me. Thus he only succeeded in inspiring in me an aversion to him, which I should

never have felt had he never had a fancy for me.

An unlooked-for occurrence united me with Mademoiselle de Silly, who was necessary as ever to the happiness of my life. Her mother came to Rouen for a lawsuit and her daughter accompanied her. I was delighted to see her again, and still more with a proposal she made to carry me with her on her return to Silly to pass some time there, agreeably to the consent of her mother, who expressed herself extremely desirous of it. The abbess and her sister, though exceedingly reluctant to have me leave them, consented to it without the slightest opposition, charmed to afford me this gratification at the expense of their own.

With the greatest joy in the world I departed in the company of the friend whom I still loved very tenderly. Her mother was cold, but obliging, and I was soon at my ease with her. I arrived at a passably fine château, somewhat sombre and ancient, as was also its master, whose conversation was extremely dull. However, I gained his good graces in a short time as well as those of his wife, who was hardly less unapproachable, and they kept me with them so long as I was contented to remain.

Scarcely any visitors came to the house. The old Marquis de Silly objected to the expense, and the Marquise, a very devout woman, was indifferent to company. I had seen only a few gen-

tlemen of the neighbourhood, who had by no means attracted my attention, when the Chevalier d'Herb...y came to pay a visit. I saw him play a game of cards after which he took leave, promising to return and make a longer sojourn. I perceived that I wished him to return; I sought the reason of this; I said to myself that he was a man of parts and good breeding, a desirable person in so solitary a place; and then, scrutinizing the grounds on which I had based my opinion of his wit, and recalling with care all that I had heard him say, I found only *gano, trois matadors* and *sans prendre.* When he returned and discoursed more at length, the wit with which I had gratuitously endowed him disappeared; nothing remained but an agreeable tone of voice, which indeed he possessed, and an air rather more genteel than that of the people whom I was accustomed to see.

He came often without being invited, and remained a long time without our making any effort to detain him; from this we concluded, Mademoiselle de Silly and I, that one of us had pleased him; but it was not easy to discern on whom his choice had fallen. I wagered that it was on her; she, that it was on me, and we made it our business to discover to whom this conquest belonged. It was in truth a most trivial matter, but in solitude all objects become inflated as if placed in a vacuum.

This rivalry was but a subject of jest between us. The observations made in consequence of it, which we reported to each other with exactness, became our employment through our idleness. However, when I learned that he had declared himself and that it was not for me, I experienced a vexation that was new to me. This was followed by more violent emotions which occasioned in me a species of terror such as one feels on falling into an abyss whose bottom one cannot see. It was jealousy with all its appanages; that was the only attack I ever had, though I have not wanted cause for it under circumstances much more likely to arouse it in me. What filled the measure of my despair was the lack of worth in its object. Recovered from my first mortification, I wrote some verses in which I said :

> I blushed for my weakness,
> Still more for my lover.

It was a plaint to Cupid for having refused to blindfold me. This absence of illusion, however, was an excellent thing for me; for, if it prevented not the violence of my disorder, it shortened the duration of it. Nothing remained with me of that ridiculous episode but the memory one retains of any singular occurrence.

I would have suppressed it if I had been writing a romance; I know that a heroine should have but

one love which she should bestow on a piece of perfection and never withdraw; but truth must make shift as it can, and its only merit is in being what it is. Its irregularities are often more pleasing than the perpetual symetry one finds in all works of art.

After passing five or six months at Silly, I had to return to the convent. They made me promise to return the following year. The Marquise de Silly was the more pressing as she expected her son to pass the summer there. She wished to provide him with such society as would render his stay in the country more supportable. He was among the number of prisoners taken at the battle of Hochstet and sent to England. The climate of that country having brought on consumption, he was allowed to return to France on parole; and the physicians of Paris advised him to go to Normandy to breathe his native air. M. de Silly had passed his life in the best society and on an agreeable footing. I had heard so much talk of him that I was dying with curiosity to make his acquaintance.

I was received at the convent with exceeding joy. I lived there as usual with my friends, M. Brunel, the Mesdemoiselles d'Épinay and M. de Rey, who continued to shew great fondness for me. However, I discovered by some slight indications a diminution in his affection. I often visited the Mesdemoiselles d'Épinay, at whose house he was

almost always to be found. As they lived very near the convent, I was in the habit of returning on foot, and he never failed of offering me his hand to conduct me to my own door. There was a large square to traverse, and in the beginning of our acquaintance he took the road along the sides; I now noticed that he crossed through the middle; whereby I inferred that his love had diminished by the difference between the diagonal and the sum of the two sides of the rectangle.

I awaited with impatience the time for returning to Silly, although my attachment to my old friend was somewhat less lively after the painful emotions I had experienced because of her. I set out thither at last when the season came. They were expecting the son of the house; everything already spoke of him. He arrived; every one was present to welcome him. I followed the others, but a little less quickly, and by the time I joined them he was ascending the staircase on

the way to his apartment. He turned to give an order and I was struck by the charm of his person and by a certain noble cast of countenance, altogether different from anything I had seen until that time. He paid no attention to any one and conversed but little at first. Some books which he had brought with him were his companions; he remained in his room or went to walk alone, and, except at the hour for meals, we scarce saw him. However, though he troubled himself to talk but seldom, his conversation was so sensible and polite that his understanding was apparent without an effort on his part to display it.

His charms and his indifference piqued me greatly. His sister, who had seen him more affable, was hardly less hurt than I; it was the constant subject of our discourse. One day as we were walking in a wood where we believed ourselves to be alone, we gave expression to our resentment against him. He was quite near us without our having perceived it, and, as he saw that we were speaking of him, he stopped to listen to us. We were seated; he concealed himself behind some trees where he lost nothing of our conversation; it was inspired by various emotions; he found it worthy of his attention and acknowledged that we had reason to complain of a neglect which we did not merit. He did not

discover himself, but, when we were returned to the château, he told us he had overheard a conversation of which he was the subject; that many hard things had been said of him, and that they had not been spoken in jest.

" One has no desire to laugh when one is complaining of you ", I replied.

This simple answer pleased him.

" I did not expect to find in the valley of Auge that which I have found ", he responded, looking at me.

Later he confessed to us the pleasure he had had in listening to our discourse though he had not been spared. From that moment he regarded us as worthy of him and quitted us no more. Our walks, our books, everything was shared in common. I thus passed whole days with a person who pleased me prodigiously, without however conceiving the thought of being pleasing to him. It seemed to me impossible that a man accustomed to the society of the most lovely women and to being caressed by them should take the slightest interest in me, who lacked both beauty and that elegance which comes from contact with the world. I wrote some verses, which I shall not produce, that shewed this disposition of my mind, for, after drawing his portrait, I finished by saying:

Alas! I fain would love him, were I but more lovely.

However, I tasted the joy of being incessantly with one whose mere presence was my happiness. I was listened to, even applauded, and in a manner so delicate that it flattered my vanity without distressing my modesty. I have never met with any one, since I have seen the world, who possessed this art to such a degree as M. de Silly. It seemed as if he became so deeply penetrated by anything that pleased him that it could never be effaced from his memory. He has often since recalled to my mind remarks that I had made to him years before.

It was so much the fashion of the whole house to be absorbed in him that I could follow my inclination to be so without appearing singular.

But several times such marked signs escaped me that they could scarce be misconstrued. Among others, having given him a purse which had been sent to me from the convent, he tossed his to his mother's waiting maid, who exhibited not less assiduity toward him; either because I wished to have the purse, or else to keep it from her, I caught it in the air before it reached her, in the presence of the Marquise de Silly, a woman of the most rigid and precise notions. The sentiment which impressed these trivial incidents upon my mind has made me preserve a distinct memory of them.

I was younger from my lack of experience than from the number of my years, but I had never been in love; for my first fancy which I had felt at fourteen or fifteen was but the result of romantic ideas that made me desirous of experiencing a passion, in order, as it seemed to me, to become a more important person. The transports of jealousy I suffered later were but the confusion of my pride humbled on every side. That bore no resemblance to the sensations that now took possession of me. I know not why I did not think to conquer them. They seemed to me to be free from danger because they could meet with no return, and I thought I had nothing to do but to conceal them with care.

The fear of involving himself with me, or of giving me an opportunity to come to an explanation with him, made M. de Silly solicitous of not finding me alone. I was resolved to say nothing, but I wished passionately for the encounter which he avoided with so much care. After I discovered the motive for his circumspection, I the more ardently desired to have some private discourse with him, in order to reassure him and to make him see how far I was from forgetting what I owed to myself. At last I had this satisfaction on a day when we went for our usual walk. Mademoiselle de Silly, being ill, could not go. Her mother, anxious only for the entertainment of her son, bade me go with him. It was not possible to refuse. We went some distance through a large meadow. He walked in silence, being much more embarrassed than I. This little triumph gave me courage to talk. At first it was of the beauty of the fields; but, feeling myself still too near the subject I wished to avoid, from the earth I soared to the sky and traversed the whole system of the universe. I held fast to that exalted region until we rejoined the company on our return to the château. M. de Silly, freed from his uneasiness, entered with good grace into the conversation, whose subject, though serious, we treated with levity. I gained this advantage that he saw I

knew how to hold my tongue as well as to speak. Moreover I tasted that exquisite pleasure unknown to those who know not how to subdue the tumult of their hearts.

After this M. de Silly avoided me no more. As I did not shun him, we had frequent interviews. He seemed charmed to converse with me and made me sensible of a most flattering esteem. He also exhibited a friendly interest in everything that concerned me. I had proof of this in the small pieces of advice he gave me from time to time of his own accord. Their success was infallible. In short I found in him everything I could wish for, except love, and that it seemed to me I desired not. It made it easy for me to love him without fear and without struggle, secure against any weakness and with no care but to conceal my feelings; but this, as I have said before, I did with ill success; and I make not the least doubt that a man of so much discernment, and so versed in gallantry as the Marquis de Silly, knew perfectly, and perhaps even better than I, what I felt for him. It is true he never allowed me to see that he perceived it, not even later when we came to be intimate confidants. I only learned from his sister a long while afterward that he had been tempted to devote himself to me, but, foreseeing that the attachment would not be lasting,

he had been held back by the respect I had inspired in him, and by pity for the sad destiny that this would prepare for me. He often said to me with vehemence : " Ah ! how I should hate any one who could be so contemptible as to deceive you ! "

Mademoiselle de D..., who had been at the convent of Saint-Louis with Mademoiselle de Silly and me, was then living on an estate half a league from our château ; she was invited to pay us a visit and came. The long sojourn which she had made at various courts in Germany and in England furnished matter for the Marquis de Silly, who was just returned from them, to converse upon. The accomplishments of M. de Silly soon produced upon her the result they were qualified to effect. He was not exempt from that coquetry usual in persons of agreeable parts, and, although the girl was plain and but moderately endowed with understanding, he was pleased with his conquest and neglected not the means of rendering it more assured. Less guarded toward her than with me, he made use of all the ruses employed in gallantry. I perceived this with so much tranquility that I am at a loss still to understand how, having experienced the horrors of jealousy for one whom I admired so little, I should have been exempt from them then, if it be not that this pas-

sion concerns rather our vanity than our love and that, not imagining I could weigh in the balance with Mademoiselle de D..., my pride was not brought into the question. This intrigue seemed to me of so little moment that, when the lady returned to her own house and declined the invitations which were sent to her to come back, I went in search of her and fetched her with me, delighted to efface by this action the indications which many others less discreet had given of my sentiments. Besides I was delighted to see the charm which had conquered me produce the same effect on another. My excuse for not having escaped it was that it was inevitable. There is so little uniformity in the effects of passion that at the time I was playing this role of indifference I was hurt at the smallest attention M. de Silly paid to any one else. I was affronted by a matter of a more serious nature that seemed to trespass on my preserves, I mean to say on his esteem and confidence.

He received many letters and packets over which he held long conferences with his mother and sister. I saw there was question of something material to him which he did not tell me; this seemed to me an injury; I talked with him no more; I scarce replied to him when he addressed me. He marked my displeasure without discovering the reason, and, as he had contracted a genuine friendship for

me, he wished for an eclaircissement and a reconciliation. Consequently he stopped me one day as I was on my way to the apartment of the Marquise de Silly. I was traversing, with all speed, a hall where he was walking up and down, lost in thought; I feigned not to see him, but he, advancing to meet me, held me back, made me sit down and seated himself beside me, saying that he desired to talk to me. He conversed with so much grace and delicacy, made such ample amends for the want of confidence which had offended me, appeared so affected by my grief, so flattered by the reason of it, that never was I more pleased with him or more reconciled to the influence he had gained over me. It was such, in fact, that his mind seemed to govern mine; he could not be moved by an emotion without my experiencing a similar one; his mirth, his melancholy, his serenity, his disquietude, all his various dispositions became mine, not because I fain would conform to them, but through some secret spring that rendered them the same.

The business whose mysterious nature had caused me so much uneasiness obliged the Marquis de Silly to repair to court sooner than he expected and sooner perhaps than he wished; for, though he had a mistress there and everything that was befitting a man of fashion, he was not dull at home.

There he found what we find not in the world, an artless affection whose sincerity was the more evident because I sought to hide it from him. He also enjoyed a serious conversation which offered fresh material to his understanding and gave him occasion to be sensible of his facility in grasping any subject, of whatever sort it was. His ideas were sprightly and precise, his expression elegant and simple, the one befitting the other, and giving an air of harmony to his discourse. There were no studied turns, nothing affected; he had too much wit to seek to shew it. An overmastering love for the army made him take an interest in all that appertained to it. I believe, if I may be permitted to hazard an opinion on the matter, that he was endowed with talents calculated to raise him to distinction in it, and that he possessed the capacity as well as the air of a commander. Ambition was the mainspring of all the impulses of his soul, and perhaps undermined his virtues. It was the cause of his mistakes and of his misfortunes. It is true it seemed to be less a wish to advance himself than an overmastering desire to put himself in his proper place.

His departure, although it was not without the possibility of a return, occasioned me a lively grief which I concealed with passable success. Mademoiselle de Silly burst into tears when he took

leave of us. I hid mine from his glances, more inquisitive than tender, but when he disappeared I felt that I had ceased to live. My eyes, accustomed to see him, no longer regarded anything. I deigned not to talk since he heard me not; it even seemed to me that I had ceased thinking. His steadfast image alone filled my mind. I was sensible, however, that each second carried him farther from me, and my affliction grew in proportion to the distance that separated us.

A few days before the departure of M. de Silly I received this letter from the Abbé de Vertot, who had secured an invitation to visit Silly, although he was not known at the château save by the reputation of his books.

I have been awaiting, Mademoiselle, the return of M. Brunel before replying to the letter you did me the honour to write to me and to the obliging proposals which I found therein as well as in the one from M. le Marquis de Silly; but apparently the spell still holds and I look not for his return before the beginning of next week. If he is as impatient as I am to arrive at the château de Silly, we shall do so at the end of the week; and I would purchase with a much longer journey the honour of seeing you and

of paying my respects to Mademoiselle de Silly, and the hope of winning the friendship of her brother. I shall be more than repaid for my fatigue if I may enjoy his conversation at my ease. We poor chroniclers would be too happy to catch some tincture of the delicacy of his thought, of his exact and noble turn of phrase, and to write as he speaks; this is between ourselves, but I own to you frankly I have never known another express himself with so much understanding and dignity. Such fine natural gifts are the mortification of study and painful reflection. Enjoy as long as possible your fortunate situation. The graces which they say attend on the person of Mademoiselle de Silly will complete the enchantment without any aid from me, and I do not know but the most powerful conjurations will be necessary to tear you from so charming a spot. The anticipation of being a spectator of your felicity will help me to surmount a certain scholar's shyness and becoming shame at arriving in a house where I am quite unknown. Your worth, that of my travelling companion, will serve as my passport, and it is so conspicuous in you both that an intruder may escape unobserved in your train. I have had the honour of seeing Mademoiselle de Grieu twice; she said to me that she lamented your absence every moment; I believed it with ease. I perceived that she suffered my conversation but for

the pleasure she had in naming your name and of making it the subject of our discourse.

I have the honour to remain with profound respect, Mademoiselle, yours, etc.

A letter so congenial to my notions gave me pleasure; but the arrival of the abbé with M. Brunel after the departure of the Marquis de Silly was disagreeable to me; it seemed to me untimely and to be only a trick, the motive of which I feared would be discovered. They remained for a week at Silly. The Marquis returned not till long after they were gone. I know not why the joy that I must have felt at his return and the circumstances accompanying it have escaped from my memory, so exact in retaining many other trifles less worthy of remembrance. I have also but a confused idea of what took place after this return. I recall only that he was more grave and thoughtful than formerly. He had moments of depression and uneasiness which seemed to indicate that some new sentiment was in possession of his heart. I had some notion of being concerned in it, but the explanation put me to confusion. I led him to confess that he was in love and perceived that it was not with me, but he surmised not the sufferings which I experienced. His sister possessed his en-

tire confidence; he passed his days in her company and I scarce saw them.

My stay at Silly, where I had become a new being (I speak thus of the change that new sentiments make in us), this sojourn, I repeat, had grown painful. I had lived through part of the year under a kind of spell. As the charm grew stronger, it threw me into a profound melancholy. I believed that a change of place would turn the current of my thoughts and compose my mind. Winter was approaching; Mademoiselle de G..., a neighbour, was returning to Rouen; I set out with her. Apparently this departure, which I regarded as a relief, did not cause me a distress equal to that which I suffered when I saw M. de Silly depart, for I have not preserved the same memory of it; it is true that we are in general less sorry to depart than to see another do so.

A short time after my return to the convent, I received a letter from M. de Silly. My joy and astonishment on seeing his writing and receiving a mark of his consideration made such an impression upon me that the form and cover of this letter remained in my mind distinctly, and I was able at the time of writing this, to pick it out immediately from among a thousand others when I sought it, for I had preserved it as well as almost all the others I received from him. I am tempted

to produce it here in order to wonder how I could have been affected by anything so little affecting.

I wished to give you time to fulfil the various commissions with which you were charged, before sending you mine. The principal one, and the one I desire you to take most heed of, is to return soon, without, however, prejudice to the pleasures, entertainment or business that may occupy you in the place where you are. Furthermore I felicitate you on your last conquests. Your modesty without doubt has hindered you from announcing them to us; but we know of them. Adieu, Mademoiselle. If the solicitude we felt for you could save you from fatigue, you will have arrived at Rouen well and sprightly.

The 29th.

I wish I had my reply to this letter; it did not say more but it seemed to me to imply more, to contain, as it were, something between the lines which was not expressed by any word. He wrote to me again to give me other commissions. I was delighted to have this slight correspondence with him till I should see him in person. I pleased myself with thinking this would be the following summer; he was to be at home and I had promised to return.

While waiting I amused myself with writing fables and romances in order to have an outlet for the emotions that filled my soul. I inscribed various portraits of the same model, whom I painted sometimes in full face, sometimes in profile. I also portrayed the persons connected with my adventures, and myself in all that related to my nature and sensibilities. These trivial compositions took the place of confidants whom I had always looked upon as humiliating and dangerous; they kept my secrets, for they never saw the light; they were indeed not deserving of it. The fable was poorly composed; the style and the sentiments were perhaps worthy of being employed to a better purpose.

All occurrences not connected with the one thought that occupied me exclusively have left no trace in my memory. I do not know what I did before the following summer when I counted on returning to Silly. But changes intervened. The old Marquis, whom I had left far from well, died. The discussion of business, and family altercations which did not admit of outside witnesses, prevented their inviting me to return. I was vexed, and, to shew my resentment, I agreed with Mademoiselle de La Ferté, niece of a president of the parliament of Rouen, to go home with her to her father's estate, which was three or four leagues

from Silly. I believed that, being there, the Marquis and his mother could not avoid inviting me to come to them. I sent them no word of my journey.

This was made in the most agreeable manner in the world, partly on the river in a boat, when we were followed by another filled with musicians who played on various instruments. M. de La Ferté, though old, was vivacious and well bred; he was a man of parts, well informed on many subjects that one likes to be instructed in. One of his brothers, an abbé and a man of fashion; his daughter, young, pretty and obliging; his son, ugly and almost a fool, made up the company.

The river turning from our route, we got into the coaches that had followed us, and slept at the house of one of my old friends whose domain lay along our road. The next day we arrived at Roeux. This was the seat of M. de La Ferté, an ancient château of a bizarre form; it was built in imitation of the Gothic letter R, like many other castles in Normandy, that represent the first letter of the names they bear. The surroundings were charming; jets of water gave forth night and day that gentle murmuring sound so soothing to the agitations of the afflicted mind. Nature there displayed in little all her beauty and variety: a large meadow divided by several brooks, and encircled by

hillocks covered with woods, that opened out as if to give a view of the sea in the distance. I have never seen, even in a picture, so beautiful a landscape as was presented to the eye from every part of that house.

How melancholy soever the disposition of mind in which I arrived, I found satisfaction in being there. I was also very sensible of the pleasure every one shewed in having me there, and above all of the unusual esteem which the master of the house displayed for me, as well as of the pains he took to render my stay agreeable. There was pleasant society there, and we wanted for none of the amusements that one can enjoy in the country. However, not having forgotten the object for which I was come, I wrote to the Marquis de Silly, on what pretext I know not, and he perceived from the date of my letter that it was in his neighbourhood. His astonishment was evident in his answer, but he was obstinate in proposing nothing. I so much wished to see him that this did not daunt me. I wrote again and proposed on the part of M. and Mademoiselle de La Ferté a visit which they were desirous of paying his mother and himself. He sent word to me that at any other time he should be charmed to receive them, but that he was overburdened with business which would make their visit extremely inconvenient. His excuse was ac-

cepted with the better grace as the proposition had been made at my instigation; for there was no complaisance which was not shewn to me in that house. However, the Marquise de Silly wrote that, if I wished to come alone, they would be very glad to see me, that her son's postchaise would meet me at the point where the coach from Caen, which passed at the foot of the avenue at Roeux, would set me down. I informed her at once of the day of my departure to the end that I might find the carriage promised me at the spot mentioned. The haste I was in to set out upon this journey made me allow so little time that I could not receive any answer before my departure.

When the day came, I rose very early though I was not to start till the afternoon. I hurried through all the functions of the day, but the coach from Caen arrived none the sooner. I went to wait for it at the end of the avenue with Mademoiselle de La Ferté. I could not imagine why it did not appear; at last it came,

I make no doubt at the usual hour, the sight of it giving as much regret to my companion as joy to me. I mounted up on it with entire confidence that at a league thence I should find the equipage that was to carry me to Silly. I was gone about a fourth of this distance when the people in the coach, conversing upon various topics, mentioned that they had met the Marquis de Silly driving post to Versailles. If the heavens had fallen upon my head, I could not have been more astounded than I was by this news. I saw myself going in search of one whom I should not find, who had not even taken the trouble to apprise me of that fact, nor of what I should do, for his carriage, upon which I had counted, was the only means of conveyance they could furnish me with to complete the stage I had still to make, and which was scarce practicable. Before I arrived at the place indicated, I flattered myself that they would find some means, failing that carriage; but when I was arrived at the point, called the Mérisier (Wild Cherry Tree), and found no horses, nor servants, nor message of any kind, I fell into a fit of despair. I was in a coach from which I could descend only to remain on the highway, or I could continue the route which did not lead to Silly. While I was deliberating, it continued to move, and with so great speed that I arrived at Saint-

Pierre-sur-Dive, where the before mentioned coach stopped for the night, and I was under the necessity of doing likewise.

There I was in a veritable pot-house (it was worse than a tavern), having no one with me but a footman who had been loaned to me; I had no servants who really belonged to me. My horror at the lodging house, the vexation of being so poorly attended, threw me into an agitation such as many other accidents in my life of more importance have not cost me, because they were less disproportioned to my resources of the moment.

Though I was no infant, I was not yet equal to an emergency, the education of the convent being backward in point of courage.

As soon as I had in some measure recovered my composure, I inquired how far I was from the Château de Silly; they told me I had passed it by one league only, but that there was no sort of conveyance to carry me from the place where I was, and that, unless I would take a horse, it would be necessary to go to Caen, which was yet four leagues further on. If they had proposed to me to mount a dromedary, I should not have been more terrified. However, I had to bring myself to accept of this expedient, and, in the meanwhile, of going to bed in the most filthy bed I had ever faced; it was placed against a thin partition that

separated my room from another, into which I had seen several soldiers and ploughmen enter. The necessity of listening to their remarks was not the least of the things that frightened me. I was reassured and mightily surprised when I heard them discussing the roundness of the earth and the antipodes. Although I could not sleep in that haunt of insects, I continued to be quite composed till break of day when I meant to put my enterprise into execution.

They brought the horse and placed me upon it rather like a bundle than a living creature; the footman who accompanied me took it by the bridle and led it as best he could. A guide, whom I took, lost the way; we were obliged to leave the horse on the bank of a stream which I crossed by a plank. We had to make the rest of the journey on foot, not knowing where we were, in a heavy rain and through the famous mud of the country of the Auge. At last I arrived at the Château de Silly, bemired to the top of my head, and such a sorry figure that I felt some satisfaction in knowing I ran no risk of encountering M. de Silly, so fearful is every woman of making a disagreeable impression.

They made many excuses for not having apprised me of the *contretemps,* alleging the precipitate departure of M. de Silly, who had scarce allowed them time to breathe. I must needs be satisfied

with this though feeling far from it, and after a short stay I returned to Roeux and thence with my companions to Rouen, where I found my customary friends and society, with the exception of M. de Rey, of whose sudden death I had learned while still at Roeux. Although I had never loved him and he no longer loved me, I was sensibly affected.

I passed the rest of the year tranquilly enough in my convent, receiving, from time to time, letters from the Marquis de Silly, always relative to things that interested him and to nothing that concerned me. I was out of humour at this; but that which irritates our passions seldom kills them. Shortly after my return, the Mesdemoiselles de Neuville were placed *en pension* at Saint-Louis. The elder was extremely pretty and passably obliging; I formed a certain degree of intimacy with her. Women are never in greater haste than to tell their secrets; she soon related to me that the son of the old Count de Novion wished to marry her, that the father, after opposing it, had become enamoured of her, and wished himself to make the match he had forbidden to his son. She protested that, if this fortune befel her, I should find an asylum in her house, in case I stood in need of one. She shewed me the letters that the count wrote to her and con-

fided to me her plan of carrying out this project without the knowledge of his family, who would not fail to offer every sort of opposition. The count was seventy; she was eighteen, possessed no property, and was nobody in particular. Her hopes seemed to me chimerical; however, she succeeded, in defiance of all prudence, by the most hazardous measures.

Thus occupied with various interests, I lived without foreseeing the horrible calamity that was about to befall me. My abbess fell so dangerously ill that I perceived I was going to lose her. Never was grief more genuine or more justifiable. I owed everything to her and I should be left without resource. The fact of her being a nun left her no means of doing anything for me. I thought only of her during her illness, which lasted but fifteen days. But when she was no more I saw the abyss into which I was fallen. Her nuns mourned her when dead as much as they had persecuted her when living; and she was indeed worthy of all regret. I have never seen in any one more abundance of kindness, so great sweetness, so much consideration for others and forgetfulness of self, nor so much nicety and punctiliousness in the performance of her duties. Madame de Grieu, her sister, who loved her fondly and had never quitted her since their early infancy, was in such

despair that it augmented mine. She should have had the abbacy; but the former intriguers were opposed to this and caused it to be given to a nun of the order, who had been at the head of the other faction. It was impossible under these circumstances for us to remain at Saint-Louis. Moreover who should be under the necessity of paying our *pension*. The portion which Madame de Grieu received from her family sufficed not both for her and for me, who had nothing. She had indeed an assured retreat in the Abbey of Jouarre, of which she was a sister, but she could not bring herself to abandon me nor a young niece who was almost as dear to her as I. She believed it would be more advantageous for us if she took us with her to a convent in Paris, a place of refuge, where I might be able to find a position.

In the midst of these embarrassing circumstances, Brother Maillard, one of my friends, formerly attached to Père de La Chaise, and then in exile at Rouen for having been more in credit than his master, came to tell me that he had received a letter of exchange to pay a quarter's *pension* for me at the convent; that he had received word at the same time that, if I wished to remain there, it would be remitted punctually without my troubling myself from whom it came.

He said that the letter was not signed and that he really did not know from whom it could be. The more fortune smiled upon me, the more I determined to maintain myself. I wished for no suspicious gifts. I discovered later that this unknown benefactor was the Marquis de Silly.

The Abbé de Vertot, who was in Paris, and to whom I had sent word, on apprising him of the loss I had sustained, that nothing remained to me but the air I breathed, dispatched to me immediately a letter of exchange for fifty pistoles; I returned it to him on the day following. M. Brunel wished also to give me as much money as I stood in need of. I refused everything, determined to accept of nothing so long as I was uncertain of being able to repay it. I was arrived at the most critical period of my life. I was sensible of the necessity I was under of fortifying myself with invincible principles wherewith to govern my whole conduct. I was resolute to endure hardship, to go to service, rather than to belie my own nature, confident that it is but our own acts that can humble us. I should never have known myself had I not undergone that trial. It taught me that we yield to necessity less because of its force than through our own weakness. However, not wishing to be singular, I borrowed from a friend, to pay for my journey, twelve pis-

toles which she was willing to lend me; it was the same girl who had passed some time with me at Silly; she was returned to live at Saint-Louis.

Madame de Grieu was invited by one of her brothers, who had an estate in Normandy, to stop at his house on her way to Paris, together with her niece, daughter of this brother. He did not propose to her to bring me, which afflicted her sensibly. Mademoiselle Dutot, one of my old friends and a woman of rare worth, offered me a refuge at the house of her uncle, M. du Rolet, with whom she lived. I remained there till the time when Madame de Grieu was to betake herself to Paris. It was there I first became sensible of the change in my condition. I had always lived in a place where I was the chief personage, where the smallest matter that concerned me was regarded as an event. I no longer received more than bare consideration. I had a headache one day : formerly that had been enough to engage the attention of the whole house from the abbess to the sisters; there they contented themselves with sending to know if I lacked aught. Never shall I forget the surprise I felt on beholding such slight notice bestowed on an occurence that hitherto I had seen treated with gravity. I felt myself after this so out of my sphere that I knew not how to act. I passed six weeks in that house,

where indeed I received abundance of kindness.

Mademoiselle Dutot was a girl of an excellent wit, and such exemplary soberness that one was put to shame in any commerce with her because subjected to a critical scrutiny that one was unable to return. Her uncle, son of Madame de la Croisette, who had been lady in waiting to the Duchesse de Longueville, had lived much in the polite world and retained its usages at an advanced age. I was the more sensible of his goodness in receiving me as I had offended him a long time before by a foolish song I had composed at a dinner he had given in my honour where there was much fine company. After that we had not met. My misfortunes made him forget my error. This generosity of sentiment deserves the memory I retain of it, as well as of the regret I felt for my indiscretion.

While I was awaiting the time to set out for Paris, Mademoiselle de Neuville, seeing by the letters from the old count, her lover, that he was becoming less eager to conclude their marriage, resolved to go to Paris with her sister and a sort of governess they had, in search of him, and to take furnished lodgings. It was almost time for Mademoiselle de Grieu to arrive there, and I was desirous of starting. The Mesdemoiselles de Neuville, who had shewed much sympathy for my misfortunes, offered to take me with them. I dis-

approved of their journey, but, not being able to dissuade them from it, I took advantage of the opportunity. We departed in company and were set down at the little Hôtel de Châtillon, where they contrived a lodging for me.

THERE I was in Paris without knowing what I was to do. I presented myself at the houses of several persons to whom I had been given letters of recommendation to the end that they might procure for me what is called a place. My highest expectation was to become a nursery governess in some family of position. Happily I had a taste for this employment and I imagined this taste to be indicative of talent. It was a strange humiliation, for one who had been brought up as I had been, to go from door to door soliciting the pa-

tronage of people to whom I was unknown, submitting to their examination and cold disdain. I gained nothing by this painful exercise and I ceased to have recourse to it.

A few days after my arrival in Paris, M. Brunel journeyed thither, came to see me, and introduced M. de Fontenelle. They had been intimate friends from their youth, which they had passed together at Rouen, their native place. A similarity of taste and temper united them closely. M. Brunel went to Paris from time to time to see him and had often talked to him of me. I knew him through his works and chiefly through his History of the Royal Academy of Sciences, which he dispatched every year to his friend, who never failed to shew it to me. And, thanks to the light which M. de Fontenelle shed upon everything he touched, I was enabled to understand a large part of it, though I ought not to have understood it at all. Consequently, I had formed in advance the high opinion that was due him. I was charmed to make his acquaintance and to be known by so celebrated a man, who at least might on occasion give me a testimonial of great value.

I was still in the *hôtel garni,* where I remained but four or five days, when I received a letter from the Marquis de Silly. He had written to me, two months before, very formal condolements on the

loss I had sustained. This one was full of sage counsel.

I hear that you are in Paris, Mademoiselle. The interest that I take in everything that relates to you made me learn with pleasure the course you have adopted.

You will be surprised perhaps to receive a letter from me full of advice; it is not my habit to give it, still less to write it, but you are my friend, and it seems to me I should converse with you on that footing.

I think, with the views you have, the shorter the stay that you make in a lodging house the better. That is not the place in which I would wish to have you make your first acquaintances.

My advice may appear strict to you; but it seems to me that in your situation I would make no toilette. Your youth may be a disadvantage to you and it will be to your interest to hide it. For the same reason I desire that you should be very circumspect in the friends of both sexes that you make. I desire also that you should be more concerned for the reputation of sense than of wit. Make use, I beg of you, of simple expressions, and above all make no use of those appertaining to science; though they may convey a meaning better, do not, I beg of you, succumb to the temptation of employing them. In

short I desire that you should be concerned solely in establishing at first a reputation for propriety without seeking to please by your accomplishments. But I fear that this last exhortation will be contrary to nature, the desire to please being natural to your sex. Without upsetting the order of the universe, make use then but of simple means to please, and let there be nothing affected in your manners.

This is enough, and perhaps too much. Farewell, Mademoiselle. I beg of you to believe that you may really count upon me.

This letter shows perfectly the kind of affection M. de Silly had for me. I was much moved to find in it so much kindness and true interest in my deportment, but I was much hurt to see that he suspected me of a desire to please, and that he regarded the inclination which I had to please him alone as a general one. Piqued at this, I made answer. He thought that his counsels had displeased me, as the letter which I received some days later showed. Here it is :

My letter produced upon you the effect I had surmised, and I could not forbear laughing on re-reading it. The first motions of people endowed with wit, and consequently with vanity, are, I believe, to

resent advice as an assumption of a superiority which wounds.

I am not surprised that you are angry at the notion I had of your desiring to please, and you were justified in exclaiming against it.

None the less, it seems to me, without offense, that women pretty generally have such a disposition. Speaking seriously, I did not intend it as you interpreted it; I meant to say by the accomplishments of your understanding. I am sure your discourse will be appropriate to the company you are in, but, when those with whom we are accustomed to live possess wit and sense, it is easy for us to fall into the habit of using certain terms. After all, I am fully persuaded that you have need of no advice. Farewell, Mademoiselle. Count, I beg of you, more upon me than upon any one.

Madame de Grieu and her niece arrived in Paris a few days after me. They met on their way the Marquise de Silly, who was coming to settle herself there, and who entered the Community of Miramion. I went with Madame de Grieu to the house of one of her brothers. He was not so implacable toward me as the others. He had a house in the Marais where we stayed till we found a convent.

I had a sister who lived with the Duchesse de

La Ferté. She came to see me at this place. Several years before she had made a journey to Rouen to make my acquaintance, for before that we had never seen each other. She had been wounded by the difference in our situations. The consideration which I enjoyed, the species of homage which every one rendered me in a house where the mistresses were submissive to me, displeased her. Even the attention which every one shewed her was but proof of the complaisance which they had for me, and added to her resentment. She had a pretty wit, a genteel air, and a passably handsome face; I thought her amiable; she, from the point of view from which she regarded me, could only be estranged. But, when she saw me deprived of my glory, she was reconciled, shewed me much kindness and gave me some apparel of which I was beginning to stand much in need.

At length we found a convent; it was the Presentation, where they were willing to receive us for a trifling sum, Madame, Mademoiselle de Grieu and myself. I had exactly sufficient to pay for one quarter, at the end of which time I saw no resource. A little before it expired I fell ill enough to give me hopes of dying. One never dies at the proper time; I was disappointed in my attempt.

When I was on the way to recovery and to

despair, my sister came to see me and announced to me with transports of joy the good fortune she believed about to befall me. She said that on her way to Versailles with Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté she had related to her that she had a younger sister, who had been singularly well educated in a convent in the provinces; she told her I knew everything that one could know and enumerated the accomplishments she averred I possessed and whose names she bungled. It was not difficult for my sister, who knew nothing, to imagine that I knew much. The Duchess, who knew no more than she, believed it all and regarded me as a prodigy; she was the most fatuous person in the world. She arrived at Versailles, her mind filled with this supposed wonder, and talked of it wherever she went, chiefly at the house of Madame de Ventadour, her sister, where the Cardinal de Rohan happened to be. Her imagination became heated while she talked and she said a hundred things more than had been said to her. They thought they ought to make sure of so great a treasure. Madame la Dauphine was still alive. They believed her to be pregnant and thought that, if she gave birth to a daughter, I might assist in her education. While waiting they decided that I ought to be placed at Jouarre in charge of the Mesdemoiselles de Rohan, all three of whom were there for the purpose of

being turned out so many pieces of perfection.

My sister, after having finished this recital, told me that it was absolutely necessary for me to go and offer my thanks and shew myself to her mistress, who was to return that day to Versailles, and that, after I had paid my duty to her, I could return immediately. I had no habit fit to present myself in; I borrowed one from one of the pupils in the convent for two or three hours, and, after my sister had somewhat mended my attire, I departed with her. We arrived at the Duchess's before she had risen. She was delighted to see me and found me charming. Owing to her prepossession, she was unable to judge otherwise. After saying a few words to me and receiving some very simple answers and perhaps sufficiently stupid ones:

"Really", she remarked, "she speaks delightfully; and she is just in time to write a letter for me to M. Desmarets which I wish him to get immediately. Stop, Mademoiselle, some one shall bring you some paper, and you will have merely to write."

"And what, Madame?" I responded in great embarrassment.

"You can put it as you please", she replied; "it must be neat. I desire he should grant my request."

" But, Madame ", I repeated, " I must know what you wish to say. "

" Oh, no! you understand. "

I did not understand in the least; in vain I protested, I could not make her explain. At length, putting together the disconnected remarks she let fall, I gathered something of the matter in hand. I was not much better advised for I did not know the usages and forms of people of title, and I perceived that she would not distinguish between a mistake of ignorance and one of the understanding. However, I took the paper that was given to me and began to write as she was dressing, without knowing what I was about; and writing still at a venture, I finished the letter and presented it to her, very doubtful of my success.

" Ah ", she cried, " that is exactly what I wished to say to him. It is amazing how she grasped my idea so clearly. Henrietta, your sister is wonderful. Oh! since she writes so well, she must write another letter to my man of business; it can be done while I dress. "

There was no need to question her this time on what she wished to say. She poured forth a torrent of words which I was unable to follow, despite the entire attention I gave to her, and I found myself under still greater difficulties during this second ordeal. She had named her steward

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THE LETTER TO M. DESMARETS

and her lawyer and this letter largely concerned them both; they were entirely unknown to me, and unhappily I took the name of one for that of the other.

" The affair is excellently well explained ", she said to me after having perused the letter, " but I do not understand how a girl of such fine parts can give to my lawyer the name of my steward. "

She thus discovered the limitations of my talent. Happily she did not on this account altogether withdraw her approbation.

While I had been attending to all these dispatches, she had finished her toilet and was eager to set out for Versailles. I followed her to her carriage; after she had entered it and my sister, who accompanied her, had taken her place, at the very moment when they were about to close the door, and I had begun to breathe, she exclaimed to my sister:

" I believe I should do well to carry her with me at once. Jump in, jump in, Mademoiselle, I wish to show you to Madame de Ventadour. "

I was stunned by this proposal; but what chilled me the heart, more than all else, was the thought of the dress borrowed for two hours and in which I feared they might force me to go around the world; and indeed it lacked little of that. Nevertheless, despite these considerations, it was

impossible to draw back; I was no longer in a position to have a will of my own, nor to combat

against that of others. I got in therefore with a heavy heart; she did not notice it however, and chattered during the whole drive. She talked of a hundred things at once, which had no connection with each other; but her conversation was of so sprightly, natural and charming a turn that we listened to her with extreme pleasure. After having addressed several questions to me without awaiting any response, she remarked:

"Since you excel in so many things, you must

know how to cast the horoscope, the occupation I love to distraction. "

I told her I had not the slightest knowledge of that science.

" To what purpose ", she replied, " have you learned so many others that are of no service to you? "

I assured her that I had learned none, but she had already ceased to listen to me and had begun to sing the praises of geomancy, chiromancy, etc.; to tell me of all the predictions which had been made to her, and of which she was still awaiting the issue; to recount several extraordinary tales relative to the subject: at last she related her dream of the previous night and many others equally remarkable which sooner or later must produce some effect. I followed her through it all with great submission and little faith.

At last we arrived; she instructed my sister and myself to go to her apartment and to rejoin her later at the house of Madame de Ventadour, where she was set down. At Versailles she lodged under the eaves of the château. It was impossible for me to mount to the top of the stairs, and, if one of the servants who followed us had not carried me up the last steps, I should have remained where I was. This fatigue of body and mind threw me into a state of prostration in which I no longer felt any-

thing and thought even less. I had not comprehended what the Duchess had said to us concerning my presentation to Madame de Ventadour; my sister had understood no better than I, and I thought there was nothing to do but wait till she sent for us. With this idea we remained in the apartment till evening when she returned, indignant that we had not obeyed her orders. They had been ill expressed, but that was not an excuse to make to her. She had intended that we should go to her, we had not done so, and I had missed my chance. I listened in respectful silence to her regrets, her reproaches, and all that the violence of her temper, when provoked, led her to say. Everything being said, she grew composed and directed all her thoughts to the morrow. She promised to take me herself to her sister, and she did. I found a person of a totally different turn. The sweetness and serenity pictured in her face gave evidence of the tranquillity of her mind and the equability of her disposition. She received me with great kindness and politeness, spoke of my mother, who had been governess to her daughter, of the esteem she had felt for her, of the good report she had heard of me, and finally of her desire to secure a suitable place for me. Afterward they permitted me to see M. le Duc de Bretagne, who was still living, and the King, who had but just been born.

They said they must also shew me all the beauties of Versailles, and they dragged me every where I thought I should die with fatigue.

Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté had talked so much of me that every one regarded me as an object of curiosity, and many came to see, examine and question me. To conclude the day she desired me to assist at the King's supper; and, after having singled me out in the crowd, she called the attention of M. le Duc de Bourgogne to me and entertained him during a part of the meal with an account of my talent and supposed learning. Nor did she stop here. Going the following day to the house of the Duchesse de Noailles, she sent word for me to join her there. When I arrived, she cried:

" Here, Madame, is the person of whom I have discoursed to you, who has so much wit and excels in so many things. Come, Mademoiselle, say something. You will see, Madame, how well she talks "

She saw that I hesitated to reply and thought she must come to my aid as to a singer who preludes and to whom one indicates the air one wishes to hear:

" Talk somewhat of religion ", she said. " You can discourse on other subjects later. "

I was so inexpressibly confused that I cannot remember how I acquitted myself. I make no doubt by disproving the accomplishments she had attrib-

uted to me, and yet it would seem not so ill as I might have done.

This ridiculous scene was repeated in other houses where she introduced me, and I saw that I was to be exhibited like a monkey, or some other such animal which goes the rounds of the fairs. I had rather have been swallowed up by the earth than continue to play such a part. Perhaps I should reproach myself for being so shocked by the scenes to which I was exposed, and for my lack of appreciation of the motive that actuated these singular proceedings, which was no other than an immoderate desire to shew my merit.

I had already passed three or four days in this distressful situation when the Duchess came home one evening in a violent passion with Madame de Ventadour and the Cardinal de Rohan, because they had taken no action in my affairs, for the reason that to establish me at Jouarre required a sum which no one was willing to pay.

" Very well ", she said, addressing my sister, " since they make so much ado about the matter, we have only to leave them alone. I am a sufficiently important person to make her fortune without aid from them. I will take her into my own household, she will be better off there than elsewhere. "

This was exactly what I had feared. Therefore

I remained motionless, speechless, unable to bring myself to the slightest acknowledgment of the offer. Her extreme agitation prevented her from remarking my unresponsiveness. My sister rebuked me justly for it when we were alone. I confessed to her that the aversion I felt for the position, and the fear of saying something that would commit me, had deprived me of speech.

Madame de La Ferté's vexation with her sister determined her to depart the next day. I flattered myself that I could once more retire to the convent, where I was so impatient to find myself, but I was not yet arrived at the end of my travels. The Duchess announced to me that she was going to Sceaux and wished to take me with her to present me to M. de Malesieu, a man most capable of judging of my true worth. The prospect of exhibiting myself upon another stage was to me a fresh burden of misery.

Before her departure, the Abbé de Vertot, her friend and relative, who chanced to be at Versailles, came to wait upon her. She offered him a chair, leaving me standing, as she was like to do when she received visitors. I could not bear to see myself so humbled before one who had always shewn me such profound respect. I passed into an adjoining room, where I shed a few tears which relieved my sense of the humiliation of my situation.

We arrived at Sceaux after dinner, and the Duchesse de La Ferté, ever full of her object, did not fail to talk of me extravagantly. Madame la Duchesse du Maine, accustomed to her exaggerations, and seldom moved by what did not interest her directly, paid little or no heed to her. Nevertheless the Duchesse de La Ferté insisted on shewing me to her, and forced her to consent to receive me, as a favour. But Madame la Duchesse du Maine scarce condescended to look at me. Madame de La Ferté, perceiving that she had failed of her purpose, begged M. de Malesieu to come and talk with me at her house. He came and spent much time in discussing with me various subjects, about which he found me passably well-informed. The desire to oblige the Duchesse de La Ferté, the tendency to exaggerate which he also possessed, and perhaps also a willingness to serve me, led him to confirm the marvellous reports which she had circulated concerning me. This commendation placed me high in favour in that circle, where the opinions of M. de Malesieu were as infallible as those of Pythagoros among his disciples. The most heated debates came to an end the moment some one announced "He said so". When he averred that I was a person of rare talent, they believed it. They came to see me, listened to me and were never tired of admiring me. Baron, a

famous comedian, who had retired from the Paris stage close upon thirty years before, was then playing at Sceaux. He prided himself on his wit. He came with the others to have a look at me, and in the course of one of his visits remarked in an ironical tone that on the following day he intended to give the *Femmes Savantes* and that I ought to be there. I replied in a manner which gave him to understand that he must not impersonate me.

Although I was treated with great consideration at Sceaux and there were amusements and pleasant distractions every day, this mode of life, so contrary to my habits of mind and body, was intolerable to me. The Duchesse de La Ferté evidently perceived this not, for she commended me continually for the way I had at once taken my place in the world; for being sprightly, ever ready for everything, and discomposed by nothing, I was far from being what I forced myself to appear. I had been born with a delicate constitution which had been rendered still more so by too solicitous care: this delicacy was due to a want of forethought on the part of those who had brought me up in a way so ill-befitting my circumstances, and was the cause of my being so sensibly afflicted by the changes in my fortunes, as well as the source of the greatest misfortune of my life.

Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté finally returned to Paris and carried me to my convent, to my great satisfaction. She lavished a thousand caresses upon me in taking leave of me; assured me that, if her friends did not persevere in their efforts on my behalf, she should have recourse to other measures, and that, whatever course affairs might take, it would not be long before I saw her again. I was overjoyed to find myself once more with Madame de Grieu and her niece and to be able to give them an account of my adventures. Mademoiselle de Grieu had developed into so sensible a young woman that I became attached to her. I looked upon her as my own child. Fresh from her nurse's arms, she had been placed in the convent on the footing of my pupil, thus to satisfy a ruling passion which I had possessed from my childhood to teach and govern some one. I have not been more successful in this than Plato, who could not find a hamlet in which to establish his laws. No one would heed my precepts, not even this young niece who had been infected by the jealousy of me disseminated through the family, and who could not pardon her aunt's friendship for me until she reached an age where she recognized that I was not altogether unworthy of it. We became more intimately united later than I have ever been with any one else.

The convent was not far from Miramion, and occasionally I went over to see the Marquise de Silly. One day I found her son with her, who was on his way to Paris. I experienced a genuine pleasure at this unexpected meeting. All that had agitated my mind since I had last seen him had not driven him from it. This ruling fancy ever retained its place and the power to move me more than any other. It maintained itself so strongly within me that it armed me against all other temptations at that period of my life when I otherwise might have been susceptible to them. We had but one short interview in the presence of his mother; what we said I recall not.

Some days after my return, Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté, who never lost sight of me, sent me some songs composed by M. de Malesieu, and desired me to make her the bearer of a letter to him on the subject. In response I wrote I know not what, apparently something very flattering, and received the following pompous reply:

Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté having departed this morning, Mademoiselle, without acquainting me of her design, I missed the chance of conveying through her the thanks I owe you for the admirable letter with which you honoured me. I had doubtless great need of her intervention to give weight to my

thanks; whereas, what she brought me from you possessed infinite value in itself, indeed, even commonplace things acquire a new importance in passing through your deft hands. I own, Mademoiselle, that I have been deprived of a great aid in losing the opportunity of praying Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté to prove, more effectually than I am able to do, how sensible I am of the honour you have conferred upon me. I did not know that she had sent you the little songs from Sceaux. I assure you that I esteemed them but little, but, if they impressed you upon paper as you say they did, I shall now regard them as of a higher merit, for I am not so much my own enemy as to contest so trustworthy and decisive an opinion.

You have so effectually convinced me of the accuracy and infallibility of your judgment that I find it impossible to dispute it. Therefore, Mademoiselle, with the knowledge you must have of yourself, tell me, I pray, what I should think of your attainments. Superior minds like yours cannot be ignorant of their own worth. They owe to themselves the justice they shew to others. Nothing is better known to them than their own understanding, and their greatest act of modesty should go no farther than to express their thanks to the First Cause, that eternal creator of our intelligence, for having so wisely apportioned it. You, Mademoiselle, owe Him more

gratitude than any one. For myself, I am incalculably indebted to Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté for having revealed to me so rare a treasure. I shall consider myself most fortunate if I am allowed to approach it from time to time, and if I may at least once in my life prove to you by some service the esteem and sincere respect with which I remain, Mademoiselle, yours, etc.

MALESIEU.

Sceaux, the 30th of May, 1710.

Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté, delighted with the success of my letter, came soon afterward in search of me, to carry me to Sceaux to assist at some new festivities. As she had not acquainted me with her intention, she was forced to wait at the door of the convent while I dressed, nor did she lose patience, despite her inclination thereto, her fondness for me being great enough to stand this test. She overwhelmed me with demonstrations of affection on greeting me, and I felt that she was indeed sincere in them. I should have been glad to have attached myself to her, but her way of living was too strongly opposed to my way of thinking. Besides this, there were other inconveniencies which made me prefer any other household to hers: a certain Louison, formerly her maid,

now almost mistress in the house, would never have endured the greater consideration shewn me, nor could my own sister have seen it without envy. I beheld in all this an inexhaustible source of bickerings, so opposed to my nature that I could fancy nothing more insupportable. I therefore set a firm resolution of not running on that rock whatever might happen, and I took good care not to mingle with the expressions of my gratitude any thing which might suggest such a possibility.

However, as I was not then without the hope of earning something, I determined to borrow a little money to defray my expenses at the convent. I obtained it from my oldest friend, M. Brunel, while waiting the issue I was led to hope for.

I pass over the journey to Sceaux, which was marked by nothing save many diversions and festivities in which I was scarce able to participate. The Duchesse de La Ferté usually desired me to accompany her when she went there. I always saw M. Malesieu, who continued to manifest a great regard for me.

The Duchesse sometimes carried me home to the Presentation at very unseasonable hours for the convent. The abbess, Madame de Riberolles, abounding in kindness, would take the keys and come herself to open the doors for me, that the sisters might not murmur.

The prospects we had of assistance from the Duchesse de Ventadour vanished. The Cardinal de Rohan, to excuse himself, said that it would be necessary to examine my tenets of faith. They knew that I was acquainted with M. de Fontenelle, and they made inquiries of him concerning my views. He replied that all he knew of me was that I had been educated at a convent under direction of the Jesuits. This testimony did not apparently suffice, for they appointed the Abbé de Tressan, afterward archbishop of Rouen, to interrogate me upon the subject in question. This took place in the house of Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté at Paris, where we assembled from all sides. This was treating the affair seriously. The examination passed off merrily, which so conciliated the good will of the examiner as to call forth the most flattering testimonials; these however were unavailing.

The Duchesse, confirmed in her design of taking me into her household, dared not yet retain me for fear of offending Louison, to whom she had not avowed her intention. I slept there one night, I do not remember on what occasion. The more I saw of the economy of the establishment, the more I feared to be drawn into it, and the more I congratulated myself on the obstacles which prevented me from entering it.

The Abbé de Vertot was just then in Paris and came to see me from time to time at the convent.

One day, as we were in a parlour where there were several grated openings, I noticed that he bowed to a man at one of these openings. I asked him who it was. He replied: "It is M. Duverney, the celebrated anatomist". I had read his works and I expressed to the Abbé the great admiration I had for him. He motioned him to join us and presented him to me. Duverney, who was lively to extravagance, felt flattered by the esteem I was prepossessed of in his favour and took a great fancy to me. He was the intimate friend of Madame de Vauvray, who lived on the side of the Jardin Royal, where he resided; he saw her constantly, and did not fail to tell her of the discovery he had made in her neighbourhood, and to urge her to take advantage of it. She consented the more readily as she had few diversions in so removed a quarter. He came, therefore, in her behalf,

to beg me to dine with her, promising to send his equipage for me the following day. I knew well that it was not the custom to present oneself in this manner, but I was in no position to be too nice. I needed new acquaintances, nay, more friends, if I could make them. This was urgent, and I could not wait for trifling formalities.

I went, consequently, to dine with Madame de Vauvray, and I was very well received. I found a woman of extraordinary appearance, but one possessed of much intelligence; a beautiful house, which she had built herself, a stalwart servant, a great establishment, a table exactly served, delightful walks, sometimes in her own garden, sometimes in that of the Simples, of which she had the keys and which adjoined hers. All this pleased me sufficiently to make me glad that she had invited me to visit her often, and even to make a short sojourn from time to time. In fact, it was not long before she sent for me to pass several days with her. My duchess was, I believe, at Fontainebleau, and I was free. Madame de Vauvray received little society, owing to the remoteness of her residence, but those whom she saw were people of the best fashion. Ferran, her nephew and a man of great wit, was often there; Duverney, also, when he had the leisure; in fact, I was always amused and also enjoyed a certain success there.

M. de Vauvray, although barely civil to his wife, was most cordial to me.

Nevertheless, one day, when he had invited a number of people to dine with him, among others, the Duc de La Feuillade and the Duc de Rohan and the Abbé de Bussy, Madame de Vauvray, doubting the propriety of introducing an unknown person into this assemblage, told her husband that, as it was a day of abstinence for me, and meat would be served at table, I could eat in her room, and that she would remain with me. She wished to spare me the humiliation as far as possible: I felt it none the less, without, however, letting it appear. I besought her to attend the dinner, declaring that I could eat alone, but she would not. Upon the guests sitting down at table, they inquired where she was. M. de Vauvray replied that she had with her a friend unused as yet to the polite world, with whom she was dining. They sent to beg her to join them with her companion. The dinner became merry and the conversation took a most agreeable turn. I made several jests which were so successful that the attention of the whole company was drawn to me. I did not let it again escape, and I was the more sensibly affected at this small triumph insomuch as it justified the step they had taken in presenting me, and avenged me on their design to the contrary.

After this there was never any hesitation, and they considered my presence, if not an honour, at least a pleasure. I was evidently in those days vastly entertaining, and, although I no longer discover any signs of it, I can understand that it may have been so. I was full thirty years of age, and my understanding, though ever mediocre, was then sustained and stimulated to action by the most urgent motives, such as the desire to regain the consideration and even the subsistence of which I saw myself deprived.

I was indebted to Madame de Vauvray for having given me the opportunity of making the acquaintance of a certain number of people of fashion and wit. She presented me at several houses to which many would scarce have risked taking one so devoid as I of all that gives value in the opinion of the world, and her manner of presenting me secured for me all sorts of kindliness and good will from those to whose houses she carried me.

One day, when the Abbé de Saint-Pierre was dining with her in company with M. de Fontenelle, and I was of the party, they talked over my situation and the measures necessary to procure a more advantageous one for me. The Abbé, guardian of the whole human race, thought that it would be wise to propose me to Madame la Prin-

cesse as a companion for Mademoiselle de Clermont, whom she had taken under her charge, and to whom, it would seem, she wished to give a better education than princesses ordinarily receive. He told us that the Abbé Couture had already been engaged to instruct her in history and in several other matters befitting her sex and rank; that I could be recommended as capable of carrying out these purposes, and of advancing her in the studies which they wished her to pursue; that it would be necessary to address myself to M. de Malesieu, whom I often saw at Sceaux, to beg him to make the proposition to Madame la Princesse, and to give a favorable account of me.

The brief sojourns I made with Madame de Vauvray did not prevent me from being always at the command of Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté. I followed her movements closely enough to be at the convent whenever she came to see me. It was not expedient that she should know that I quitted it for any other than herself.

Soon afterward, in accordance with the scheme which we had laid, she took me to Sceaux. M. de Malesieu came to see me as usual. I spoke to him of my desire for a place in keeping with my former mode of living, and disclosed to him my views relative to Mademoiselle de Clermont, into which he entered with readiness, promising to

do his best for me, and that as soon as possible.

An hour after this conversation, he returned to tell me that, in reflecting on my plan, he had formed another which he considered better. He had wished to strengthen my cause with Madame la Princesse by a word of commendation from Madame la Duchesse du Maine, and on asking her for it she had said : " But, Monsieur, if this young girl is possessed of so great worth, why give her to my niece? Would it not be better to take her myself? " He had replied that she could not do better; that I was qualified for any position, that I would be very useful to his wife, Madame de Malesieu, governess to Mademoiselle du Maine, in assisting her in the education of that young lady. Madame la Duchesse du Maine had replied : " You must present the matter in a favourable light to M. le Duc du Maine and gain his consent to the added expense ". There was then no question of the situation I occupied afterward.

This proposition accorded perfectly with my views, and I was delighted with it. I thanked M. de Malesieu a thousand times. He told me that there now remained nothing to do except to inform Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté, to whom I had as yet said nothing. He added that Madame la Duchesse du Maine would herself speak to her of the affair, and it would then be settled. She did

so, but the Duchess became furious at the proposal, said she would not permit any one to take from her a person whom she had destined to be the comfort of her life. Madame la Duchesse du Maine replied that she had supposed, from what had been said to her, that she was seeking a place for me, and that consequently she had concluded that she did not intend to keep me near herself. Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté, after having poured forth all her complaints, finished by saying that she did not wish to retain me against my will, but that I ought to make her some explanation.

M. de Malesieu, who came for the third time that day to advise with me, apprised me of this, and it filled me with apprehension. He said to me :

" You will have an explanation this evening, let us see what you will say. "

" Dictate my answer yourself, Monsieur ", I replied; " you have directed the whole affair, and I am only desirous of following your advice. "

He was of opinion that I should say to Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté that I owed her everything and made her absolute mistress of my destiny. I should have done better had I avowed to her the reasons which prevented my going to her, and besought her to consent to what now opened before me. This would have been more

ingenuous and more conformable to my inclinations, and I should have escaped the grave inconveniencies into which this circumspection plunged me; but I believed that I should permit myself to be guided.

At last in the evening Madame de La Ferté returned to her apartment. I awaited her with dread, foreseeing the storm I was to encounter, and grieved beyond measure because I saw myself accused of injuring one who had overwhelmed me with bounties. She entered the room, not with the vivacity that was habitual to her, but with a haughty coldness.

She seated herself quietly and said to me :

" I have learned with surprise, Mademoiselle, that you are seeking a place. I presumed that you were counting upon me. If you prefer to be with a great princess, you should not have entered into negotiations without making me privy to them. But I must know what you purpose and what you are desirous of doing. "

" Whatever you please, Madame ", replied I, " I am in your hands; I owe you everything : you shall dispose of me at your pleasure. "

" Very well, Mademoiselle ", she returned, " since I am mistress, I will yield you to no one, and I shall take care that you shall be so contented with me as to regret nothing. "

She promised me later that she would fit up a pretty apartment in her house, where I should be as much mistress as herself, that I should keep her company when she was there, and that, when she went to Court, she would leave me an equipage in Paris to do with as I pleased.

I should have found this scheme of life agreeable, had I not considered the reverse, had I not known that my sister, received at first on the footing of favourite, was now become lady's maid; had I not believed that the stronger her infatuation for me, the less durable it would prove, and the more it would excite the jealousy of that troop of women of which the house was full. For, besides Louison, who was at their head, my sister and other maids in due order, she was educating a young girl, whom she called Sylvine, beautiful as the day, whom she had picked up in the fields at Loupe, one of her estates. She idolized this nymph, and spared nothing in her adornment and the cultivation of her talents, among which was an admirable voice. This warm affection did not in the course of time prevent her from treating her like the others, a fate as inevitable as that of the lovers of Circe. What should I have done in the midst of all this? But how to escape from it? I saw M. de Malesieu again. He assured me that the affair was hopeless,

that Madame la Duchesse du Maine would not quarrel with her old friend the Duchesse de La Ferté for my sake, and that all I could do for myself was to break with her, as there was nothing more to hope for.

With this design I took the strange resolution to study to displease this person, who was so charmed with me, and whom I loved : for the many proofs of friendship I had received from her had affected me sensibly; moreover, although she possessed some grave defects, I found her extremely amiable and did not regard as a personal demerit the inconveniencies with which she was surrounded.

To understand what it costs one's self love and kindness of heart to counterfeit evil, one must have tried it; and that is an experience which is not common.

I had occasion to put this singular project into execution during a journey which we made to La Ferté. She left nothing undone to render it agreeable for me. She knew that I was extremely fond of Mademoiselle de Grieu, who was with me at the Presentation; she invited her to be of the party and carried us both off with her. During the journey I felt indisposed and did not dissemble as was my custom. I gave way to my different humours, which must have appeared the

more shocking to her as she had perceived nothing of them heretofore. I opposed what was not to my liking; I spoke my mind without bringing it into accord with hers : in short, I allowed myself every liberty; but it cost me more effort than the restraint would have done. She was wounded, but without feeling the distaste with which I wished to inspire her, an enterprise the more difficult to pursue as I had never seen her more amiable nor more obliging. In the country she laid aside an air of loftiness which she maintained at court and in its purlieus, and we lived on the most familiar terms with her. She carried this so far that she gathered together not only her servants, but all those who supplied the house, such as the butcher, the baker, etc.; seated them around a large table and played a sort of lansquenet with them. She whispered in my ear : " I cheat them, but it is because they rob me. "

We passed a fortnight at La Ferté; it is a lovely spot. My intimate friend was with me and we enjoyed delightful walks and excellent fare, although the Duchess had not brought her cook with her, against whom she had a spite, because he had asked her for some silver spits.

" That is the way large establishments are ruined ", she explained, " silver spits without end. It cost the Maréchal de La Ferté twelve

hundred thousand francs for silver spits. I would rather have my concierge serve my meals. "

And so it was arranged. On our return from the journey she said to me :

" Your lodging in my house is not yet ready, I shall have it arranged for you. You will pass the time necessary for this at your convent, where I shall pay for your entertainment. "

I returned thither with joy, and in the hope that, through one delay and another, a favourable solution of the difficulty might present itself. Indeed her fear of estranging Louison, and some other perplexities which she was under at this time, made her again defer my entrance into her household, which I expected would have taken place toward the end of the year. However, at that juncture, she wrote to demand a suggestion for some letters to the king and queen of Spain, M. de Vendôme and Madame des Ursins, on the occasion of their winning a battle, on which she wished to congratulate them. She directed me at the end of her letter to pay the Abbess for the month of January, as she was still under the necessity of doing without me for that length of time, but added that she loved me none the less on that account. The beginning of the new year furnished me an occasion for writing to M. de Malesieu, whom I had not seen since the failure

of my plan, the Duchess not having again wished to carry me with her to Sceaux. My letter contained the usual compliments of the season. M. de Malesieu sent the following in reply :

Versailles, January 16, 1711

I take it very ill of the post, Mademoiselle, for having delayed the precious evidence of your thought of me for a fortnight. I have but this moment received the letter which you did me the honour to write to me the first day of this year. The speed is not great in proportion to the distance; but what vexes me still more, Mademoiselle, in reading your letter, is to learn that you are still in the convent; from this I should have inferred Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté was gone on a journey, had I not had the honour of seeing her during the first of this month. I know not, therefore, what interpretation to put upon the continuation of your seclusion. Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté did me the honour at Sceaux to speak to me of you with so great approbation, and expressed so sincere a desire, on hearing the proposal which I made to her on behalf of Madame la Duchesse du Maine, of securing you for herself, and explained to me in such obliging terms how necessary she considered you in the management of her affairs and to her own happiness, that

I confess, Mademoiselle, I advised her to retain for herself a person whose rare qualities she valued so justly. I could therefore scarce believe to-day that you had not yet come to an understanding with this lady, who has indeed so uncommon a relish for merit, and who seemed so predisposed in your favour. When I have the honour of seeing her, I shall seek an explanation of this enigma.

I have the honour to remain, Mademoiselle, with profound respect, yours, etc.

Upon receiving this letter from M. de Malesieu, I informed him I had reason to believe that Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté no longer thought of attaching me to herself, that I therefore regarded myself as free to profit by the kind offers of Madame la Duchesse du Maine, had I still pretentions in that quarter. He showed this letter to the Duchesse de La Ferté, who, in a transport of anger, sent me word through my sister that she wished to hear no more of me. I was in despair that he should have read this letter to her, and thus drawn down upon me her indignation, which I had indeed merited. This was, so it seems to me, the most discreditable act of my life, for, although my sister, who apparently did not wish to have me with her, had exaggerated the indecision

of the Duchess, and had given me to understand that she would never make up her mind to make a place for me in her household, but would ever leave me in uncertainty, I was not so fully persuaded of this as to state the fact thus positively to M. de Malesieu. However I wrote him again to inform him of the final rupture. Here is the reply that he made to me.

Versailles, January 24, 1711.

I read the last letter with which you honoured me to Madame la Duchesse du Maine. Her Serene Highness was not a little surprised to learn that Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté had through your sister released you from farther obligation to her. She commands me, Mademoiselle, to inform you that in the Spring, that is to say at about the time when she takes up her residence at Sceaux, she will execute the plan which she formerly contemplated. She will, in the meantime, have leisure to discuss it again with Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté, from whose own lips, as you will readily see, she cannot dispense with hearing that you are free to consider a new engagement. Madame la Duchesse du Maine feels herself bound in honour to do this. I shall be overjoyed, Mademoiselle, to see the affair

terminate in accordance with your wishes. A delay of two or three months will not hinder its success.

I am, Mademoiselle, beyond all expression, yours, etc.

This letter assured me as to my lot, which I then pictured other than it proved to be. Nevertheless I remained for yet another eight months at the Presentation. I went abroad but seldom, for fear of receiving orders which might not find me there, or of rendering my conduct suspected. I heard nothing farther till four or five months later.

I retain but a confused memory of all that filled this period. I recall merely that M. de Silly, informed by his mother of my affairs, wrote me the following letter from the army with which he was then serving.

At the Camp of Folleux, this 17th of August.

I believed you knew me better than you seem to. From what have you inferred that position governs my esteem and friendship? I know too well that fortune depends more upon chance or circumstances than upon merit. I am very pleased at the expectations you have. I shall be even more so when you are settled as I would wish to see you.

Favour is the stepping stone to all things : try I

beseech you to make a speedy use of it. Envy follows close, even at the moment when few people seem like to incur it. I beg of you also to try to please, to be obliging and to try to shew only so much of your wit as will be agreeable to those with whom you converse. Above all let no one fancy you capable of governing. Be content to shew a discreet disposition, with pleasing accomplishments. People care for these more than for understanding : the first charms, the latter is feared. I am sure that you have reflected on all that I write to you, and I but repeat it to shew you that I think as you do.

Send me more particular news of yourself, and count upon the interest which I take in all that concerns you. Adieu, Mademoiselle.

I was beginning to feel uneasy at hearing nothing, when my sister brought me a letter from Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté, and the following one from M. de Malesieu.

At last, Mademoiselle, the time is come. Madame la Duchesse du Maine commands me to inform you that you may come in two or three days. Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté lately spoke to her of you so well that she determined to delay no longer. It will give me great pleasure, Mademoiselle, to be able

soon to render you some slight service and to prove to you indeed that I am, beyond all words, your very humble, etc.

Sceaux, September 11, 1711.

I shall not here transcribe the furious letter which Madame la Duchesse de La Ferté sent me, although I still have it, because it seems to me unworthy of both her and myself. She directed me to betake myself to Sceaux on the following morning that she might herself present me to their Serene Highnesses. My sister apprised me, on delivering these two letters, that a waiting-woman of Madame la Duchesse du Maine had left, that they had considered the situation good enough for me, whose momentary popularity had waned, that the Duchesse de La Ferté, perceiving here a chance to revenge herself, had seconded the idea, and was promising herself a solace in introducing me on that footing.

I saw my ruin in this turn of events and I felt that the indelible imprint of waiting-woman would leave me no hope of return to fortune. However it was impossible to draw back. I could neither deny the measures I had taken to enter the service of Madame la Duchesse du Maine, nor make conditions with a person of her rank. I beheld

myself as much hated by the Duchesse de La Ferté as I had been loved by her. Without support, without resource, I was forced to submit to the yoke.

THE LETTER TO M. DE FONTENELLE

I betook myself consequently to S[illegible] in obedience to the commands of the f[illegible] led me as in triumph and presented me to the Princess, who scarce bestowed a glance upon me. She proceeded to drag me, bound to her chariot wheels, to the houses of all those [illegible] I should be introduced. I followed her with the air of a vanquished captive. This ceremony finished, she informed me that she had no further need of me, and that in the future she desired to have no relations with me. I suffered more from the loss

I betook myself consequently to Sceaux in obedience to the commands of the Duchess. She led me as in triumph and presented me to the Princess, who scarce bestowed a glance upon me. She proceeded to drag me, bound to her chariot wheels, to the houses of all those to whom I should be introduced. I followed her with the air of a vanquished captive. This ceremony finished, she informed me that she had no further need of me, and that in the future she desired to have no relations with me. I suffered more from the loss

of her friendship than from the effects of her resentment.

I spent this first day in so confused a frame of mind that I have no distinct recollection of it. I only know that I was strangely surprised on seeing the abode set apart for me. It was in an entresol so low and dark that I was obliged to walk with bent head, groping my way. I could not breathe for lack of air, nor warm myself for lack of a fire place. This lodging appeared to me so insupportable that I tried to address some remonstrance to M. de Malesieu. He would not listen to me. To all the kind attentions shewn me and the esteem he had manifested for me had succeeded the disdain one feels toward servants. I did not expose myself to it again. All those in the house who had formerly sought me out also deserted me the moment I was held so cheap.

I entered upon my duties. I was given for my share what is called, in the terms of the art, the tacking of chemises. I found myself greatly at a loss. I had never done but the trifling needlework with which one amuses oneself in a convent, and I understood nothing of any other kind. I passed as much of the day in taking the measures, as in executing this important undertaking; and, when Madame la Duchesse du Maine put on her chemise, she found at the armhole

that which should have been at the elbow. She demanded who had done this pretty piece of work, they told her that it was I. She remarked, without irritation, that I did not know how to sew, and that such tasks must be left to others. I was consoled for my ill-success by what followed. I had indeed done as well as I could, but, despite my good-will, I ever discharged such duties ill. A hundred times have I admired the patience with which this princess, although naturally intolerant, bore with my stupidity.

The first time that I filled for her to drink, I poured the water over her instead of into the glass. The defect of my extreme short sightedness, joined to the agitation I always felt on approaching her, made me appear devoid of all comprehension of even the simplest things. One day she bade me bring her some rouge and a small cup of water, which were upon her toilet table. I entered her room, where I stood bewildered, without knowing which way to turn. The Princesse de Guise chanced to pass through, and, surprised to find me in such confusion, asked :

" What are you doing here ? "

" Oh ! Madame ", I exclaimed, " rouge, a cup, a toilet table ; I see none of them. "

Touched by my distress, she put into my hands

the objects, which, without her aid, I should have sought in vain.

I will tell some more of my strange blunders, which fell little short of imbecility. Madame la Duchesse du Maine, being at her toilet, asked me for some powder. I picked up the box by the cover, it dropped, naturally, and all the powder was spilled over the dressing table and upon the princess, who gently remarked :

" When you lift anything, you should take it by the bottom. "

I remembered this lesson so well that, a few days later, when she asked for her purse, I took it by the bottom and was greatly astounded to see a hundred louis, which it contained, roll upon the floor. After this I knew not where to take hold of anything.

I spilt as stupidly a package of gems which I seized exactly by the middle. It may be imagined with what contempt my companions, deft and trained, regarded my clumsiness.

I did all that I could to win their good graces. Decorum inclined me to hold commerce with them and necessity constrained me thereto. The cold was beginning to make itself felt; there was but one waiting room in common where we could warm ourselves; I consequently passed part of the day in conversation with them. I made mine con-

formable to theirs. I said to them what I thought would be agreeable; but, either because I chanced not happily upon this or caught not their air with sufficient naturalness, I incurred their aversion. I felt none for them, but some distaste, and I chose rather to harden myself to bear the cold than their ill-humour and the fatigue of their discourse. Consequently I shut myself up in my closet and sought consolation in reading.

I did not enjoy sole possession of this retreat. The first waiting-woman, who slept at night in the chamber of the Duchesse du Maine, shared it during the day with me; she had hours for sleeping, hours which she wished to spend with her husband. At such times I took up my abode in a grove. The cold or rain left me no refuge but the galleries. My lodging at Versailles, where we passed the winter, was even more unbearable. No ray of light ever penetrated to it; a companion more unamiable than the one I had at Sceaux during the summer shared it day and night; lack of space obliged us incessantly to dispute the ground, while the smoke constrained us to abandon it.

The two waiting-women with whom I alternately shared my room were on bad terms; it was impossible to conciliate the one without estranging the other. In order to escape civil war

I exposed myself to foreign war, and changed my treaties with an inconstancy dependent upon the seasons. I should have been glad to effect an agreement between them; but the most praticed diplomat would have failed. It is possible to gain some ascendancy over those who have rational views, recognized interests, ordinary passions; but not over those whose ideas are topsy turvy, whose impulses are perverted, and whose low interests are hidden in the dust.

However, my sister, distressed at my not receiving the entire approbation of the body of women in waiting, apprised me that they found me cold and too little obliging; that this passed for pride and disdain; that I ought to put an end to these disadvantageous reports. I had grown so docile that I said to her :

" Very well ! What shall I do? "

" You must pay your duty ", she said, " to the foreign women who are in the house and be very obliging to them. "

" I will go when you please ", I answered.

Charmed to find me in so admirable a frame of mind, she took me at once to a large assembly of these women. Some were playing cards, others were looking on. I seated myself near those who were unoccupied, and chose the one I found to my hand to address my civilities to. I lost myself

in compliments, in flatteries, in affectionate airs; in short I brought to bear not everything that there was in me, but everything that I had been able to gather from afar. The attempt miscarried. It happened that she whom I made the object of my artifices belonged to the dullest of that order. My lack of discernment became a subject of ridicule. To say the truth, all their countenances looked as much alike to me as those of a flock of sheep.

My sister dragged me then to Versailles to visit the women of the Duc d'Anjou, whom I thought superior to the others. They asked me if I had many vails, how much of this, of that; all subjects of which I knew nothing, and ignorance of which made me appear very foolish. But I have talked enough and too much of my situation.

I had not been in possession of this place a fortnight, when the Marquis de Silly, imagining it to be better, wrote me this letter to pay me his compliments :

Although it has been a long time since I heard of you, Mademoiselle, I still feel a veritable interest in all that concerns you. I am delighted that you are settled permanently with Madame la Duchesse du Maine. I was desirous of your having the position that you are to occupy from the moment that I

heard there was any question of it. I am only sorry to reflect that you will no longer be able to pass any time in the place which I inhabit quite frequently. I have by no means forgotten the pleasure it is to be there with you, and I know from experience that one with difficulty finds... But I perceive that I praise you too much and I do not wish to spoil you. However, I believe that my precaution is useless. You will soon learn your true worth. Adieu, Mademoiselle, I should much like to see you.

This proof of remembrance from one who was ever equally dear to me gave me as great satisfaction as my soul was then capable of. However, this life, so hard, so distasteful, so different from the one I had hitherto led, threw me into a melancholy that was discovered in my face. That was the only thing that could betray me, for I spoke to no one. Madame la Duchesse du Maine complained of it, and M. de Malesieu told Duverney to apprise me of it. He came to Sceaux now, and then and had praised me there prodigiously. His passion for anatomy made him believe that that science was the foundation of all true merit; in order to extol my worth, he averred that I understood the human body better than any girl in France. The Duchesse de La Ferté, as eager now to hold me up to ridicule as she had previously

been to have me appreciated, missed not this feature of the encomiums passed on me. Duverney, in fulfilling his mission, exhorted me to bear my present ills in the hope of a happier future. He prophesied to me that I should be known, esteemed and valued; that I would win the confidence of the princess, and that her favours would infallibly follow. I believed no more in this than in the *almanachs*. I was good for nothing, not even to say a word. Madame la Duchesse du Maine addressed none to me, and seemed to make no doubt that I was capable neither of hearing nor answering. I had occasion to be sensible of how completely I was ignored upon venturing to make a joke.

A few years after the princess had made the acquisition of Sceaux, she had instituted the Order of the Bee, with its laws and regulations, a fixed number of knights and dames, who were chosen in chapter with great ceremony. From the moment there was a vacant place, all the persons of her court intrigued to obtain it. This event occurred five or six months after I was become a member of her household. A great number of candidates presented themselves, among others the Countesses de Brassac and d'Uzès, and the President de Romanet. The latter gained it to the prejudice of these ladies, who affected high resent-

ment, and complained that the election had not been regular. This led me to conceive of addressing in their name a protest in the jargon of the palace, and written in a disguised hand, which I sent to the president by secret means. And I had the diversion of seeing the uneasiness they were in to discover whence came this production. It at first was attributed to M. de Malesieu or to the Abbé Genest, then to the persons interested; it was learned that they had no part in it. At length the suspicion descended upon the most foolish members of the household, without, however, arriving at me, who contented myself with enjoying the embarrassment they were in and with listening to their incessant talk of it during the fortnight the futile search occupied. This gave me occasion to compose these verses, which the doubt of success hindered me from producing.

Accuse no more Genest, nor yet Malesieu the great
Of having writ the document which doth excite
So much disquietude. The author keeps no state.
But rather quit your telescope, your candle light
And your inquiring glances 'neath you concentrate;
Perchance the feeble radiance will to you disclose
The humble author lying in the dust, who knows?

The humiliation of my situation gave a tincture even to the commendations that were bestowed on me. I received one from M. de Lassay, at

which I felt affronted. Madame la Duchesse du Maine, while undressing, let several louis fall from her pocket. I picked them up and placed them on her dressing table.

" Your Highness has trusty women ", said Lassay, looking at me.

I cast down my eyes in confusion, saying to myself : " Do I merit to be thus commended? Must I not resent it? " Those were but the trivial vexations attached to my situation that sprang up each day beneath my feet. I experienced one of a very different nature in the loss which I suffered of an intimate friend. I received this letter from the Abbé de Vertot at the moment I least expected such sad news :

I regret exceedingly to be obliged to announce to you the loss which we have just sustained in the death of M. Brunel, your friend and mine. You lose, Mademoiselle, more than another, because he esteemed you more than any one in the world. If an humble devotion could replace what you lose of so much worth, I should permit myself the liberty of offering you an inviolable attachment. M. de Fontenelle is inconsolable. It is no question of philosophy; nature, his kind heart, have claimed their rights. He is truly to be pitied; and you not less. I hope that the austerity of mind which sometimes I have

deplored will not abandon you on this sad occasion.

I have the honour to remain, etc. — M. Brunel died at Rouen of pleurisy.

December 1st.

My grief was as lively as it was justifiable; I had lost an old friend, estimable because of his merit, worthy of my affection because of his for me; and I had had the misfortune to offend his friendship by the coldness which he had remarked in mine. The infatuation which possessed me, the distraction of seeing so many new objects, had brought about a great change in my soul. He had perceived it on one of the journeys he made to Paris after I lived there and had been justly hurt by it. I discerned nothing and thought not of regaining his confidence; but a letter which he wrote to me a short time before his death apprised me of my errors and augmented my sorrow for the loss I sustained, the more that he was on the point of taking up his residence in Paris, and, in proportion as my reason returned to me, I should have recovered my old feelings. I was sensibly afflicted and am still, on finding myself deprived of such a friend.

He had lent me some money without receipt when I believed I could take it with a certainty

of repaying it. I had thought only of discharging this obligation ever since I had anything; and happily I had the small sum by me. I sought M. de Fontenelle to implore him to see that it went to the heirs. I found him in an affliction which gave me pleasure, because it was an honour to our friend. He said to me a great while afterward that he had never been able to make good his loss, and I, no more than he, have never found any one of so rare a worth.

The sad and painful life which I led occupied my mind incessantly in devising measures to escape from it. I passed my days and nights in reflecting on these. The few people who took an interest in me also sought to propose to me some way out of the difficulty. A place as governess in the house of a German princess was offered to me on profitable and honourable conditions. I was extremely tempted to accept it. However, not wishing to rely on myself, I wrote to the Abbé de Vertot, the only friend remaining to me, in regard to it. His wise answer, the uncertainty of the promises, the inconveniencies he laid before me, determined me to refuse the proposal. I received a yet more singular one a short time after.

An obliging lady, with whom I was on sufficiently good terms, came to see me one day at Sceaux and said to me:

" I know that you have found a good deal less than you hoped for in your present situation; that it is infinitely disagreeable to you, and that you propose to quit it; I come to offer you another. There is some one in the world ready to settle a sum upon you, to the end that you may never want, by which means you will be able to have a small apartment in Paris, and to live comfortably, with servants to wait upon you. The only stipulation is that you should agree to have a door in your apartment communicating with another house, and that you will permit a lady to enter there, who will be one of your friends, and who will come to visit you often. "

I had no need on that occasion to seek advice for my answer; it was, as may be easily conjectured, an absolute negative. The lady insisted; I asked her no questions, judging it best not to solve the mystery. All that I could surmise was that it concerned some one who begrudged not expense for the sake of keeping his intrigue secret.

A third proposal was made to me by one of the greatest noblemen in the kingdom. The princess, his wife, very intimate at our Court, as was he also, expressed to me the desire he had of seeing me, and begged me to receive his visits. The channel through which this request was made obliged me to accede to it. I saw him; he commiserated my

situation, offered to effect my release from it, proposed to me a place in his household with all kinds of inducements, and certain responsibilities in the education of his daughters. I was tempted anew and consulted the Abbé again. He made answer with as much reason as before, and counselled a refusal. The excessive earnestness which I had been sensible of in this proposal rendered it suspected, and determined me not to accept of it.

These openings for my deliverance, always closed again by the barriers I myself placed around me, served but to make me sensible of the impossibility of escaping from my misfortunes. I experienced a new trial that affected me greatly. There was at Sceaux a Madame de M..., who was employed to play the part of confidant in the comedies. She had from the first offered me her room in place of the wood where I had taken up my residence, and whence the cold finally chased me, as hunger chases the wolves. I the more readily accepted of this offer as I went to her room but when she was not there. However, this gave me an appearance of intimacy with the woman. She had been very beautiful; her husband, believing her still to be so, continued to be extremely jealous of her. As she was apprehensive of living with him, she implored Madame la Duchesse du Maine to carry her with her when she went to Versailles, and to give her lodgings

in her hôtel. She passed the day at the palace and begged leave of me to go to my closet when she had anything to do. I consented, being unable in fairness to refuse her the like hospitality at Versailles which she exercised toward me at Sceaux.

One day, when I was in the apartment of Madame la Duchesse du Maine, she asked for the key of the entresol; I gave it to her and soon afterward mounted thither myself. I was surprised to find her taking coffee with a Swiss officer of our court. I reproached her for this in jest, for I did not think that there was any artifice in their being together, nor do I in truth believe there was any.

However, her jealous husband, being come to visit her, was told that she was in my apartment; he mounted thither, and, on finding Diesbach, carried away his wife in a transport of anger without regard to the presence of my companion or myself. He ill treated her, so she averred, to the degree that she was forced to seek refuge in a convent. Unfortunately for me, she chose the one I had just quitted; and, in order to procure the privilege of entering, she wrote a letter to the Minister in which she accused her husband, formerly a protestant, of endangering her faith.

I knew nothing of all this. As Madame la Duchesse du Maine was gone to pass a few days at the Arsenal, whither she had not taken me, I was at the house of Madame de Vauvray. We were seated at table, when to my surprise I saw a footman in our livery enter. He said to me that Her Serene Highness ordered me to come to her at the house of the president, where she was: this was M. de Mesmes. I arrived there without knowing what was afoot. I saw on all sides grave countenances. A letter from M. de M... was read to me in which he accused me of abetting, for a great while, an intrigue between his wife and M. Diesbach, whom he had surprised in my room. In order to give the more weight to his accusation, he said that, having been educated by the Maréchale de

La Ferté (I had never seen her), it was not surprising I was qualified for such an office.

I related simply the fact as it was. I affirmed, and it was true, that that was the only time those two persons had met in my room, that I had no knowledge nor even the smallest suspicion of any intrigue between them, that, furthermore, I had received no education save that of the convent, where I had lived from my birth to the time of my admission into the household of Her Serene Highness. They paid but slight heed to my defence and I heard some one observe : " I would not have thought it possible. " I would have thought it still less possible for me ever to suffer under a like accusation.

After this interrogation I was sent back to Madame de Vauvray, where, on the day following, I experienced another humiliation of a less serious nature. She desired me in company with her son to stand sponsor for the child of one of her servants; I appeared so stupid to the curé that he demanded whether I could sign my name. To say the truth, I had not been able to tell him from what parish I came, nor to answer any of the questions he put to me.

We returned to Versailles, where the affair of Madame de M... was much talked of. They had thrown her husband into prison because of the

letter which she had written against him. I found myself disagreeably implicated in the affair. My vexation was the more keen as I was but little known in the world, and this was an unfortunate entrance into it. In the extremity of my distress I received the unkindest cut of all. Mademoiselle Nanette, one of my companions, said to me obligingly :

" This event is exceedingly disagreeable for all of us; they talk of one of the ladies of Madame la Duchesse du Maine and thus confound us all together. "

For my part I was so confounded to find myself living with her that it had never occurred to me that this misfortune could concern her.

My innocence and the truth supported me, in default of other vindication, and disssipated the impression against me. I was forbidden ever to see Madame de M..., and I consented cheerfully. The sight of her would have been as odious to me as was that of Diesbach, the first meeting with whom made me shudder in remembrance of the pains that he had brought upon me.

So many accumulated ills; vexations without number; the mortifications attendant upon my humiliating situation, unendurable alike to a delicate body and mind; a passion, chimerical, if you wish, which occasioned me naught but painful

emotions, made me look upon life with aversion. The desire of delivering myself from it weakened all opposing reasons. Our judgment accommodates itself almost always to that which our inclination favours, and we seldom see but what we wish. I came then to think that I ought to quit a life which seemed to me no longer supportable. The sentiment that occupied my heart (and perhaps this was but an adroit manœuvre on its part) wished to see the light before being forever extinguished, and inspired me to communicate by letter information of my design to the one who was in part the cause of it. I wrote. After I had yielded thus far to my folly, I returned to my senses. I resolved to live. I dispatched not the letter; I kept it as witness against myself of the confusion of my mind and of the excesses into which we fall when we abandon ourselves to our passions. Here it is :

It is five years since I saw you for the first time. You treated me with an indifference that seemed to verge upon contempt. Vexed with you, I strove to detect your faults; and it chanced that I discovered everything that was amiable in you. I desired to hate you, and I loved you. I sought to conceal the sentiments to which I well knew you could not respond. However, I could not endure that your insensibility hould deprive you of all knowledge of them.

The smallest notice from you touched me to the last degree. I wished so much to make you participate in everything that concerned me that even your indifference was rewarded by my gratitude. I looked upon it as a precaution you observed to tear from my heart all futile and dangerous hopes. You might have proceeded to harshness with me without effecting anything but an increase in the esteem I had for you; esteem so perfect and so humble that it led me to condemn my design of pleasing you, without depriving me of my desire to do so. Nor long absence, nor change of fortune, nor the aid of practiced reason, has been able to make me forget. Further more, I have wished to see and have seen those that are considered to be most amiable. How different from you every one seemed to me! No one resembles you, as nothing resembles that which I feel for you. I grow not accustomed to seeing people who are in love, and I comprehend not that any one can love another if that other be not you whom one loves. But what will you think at this moment of the confession I make to you? For my part, I feel no shame. Sentiments such as mine are, in a measure, worthy of esteem. I seek not to move you. I have wished but to apprise you of what I felt for you and to inform you that I am resolved to put an end to my pains. I feel too strongly that I belong to you to dispose of myself without rendering you some account. I await

a word from you; and that is all that I await before taking an eternal farewell of you.

Several years had passed since I had seen M. de Silly or heard his name spoken. Some one by chance having named him, I received such an impression that, desiring a moment afterward to quit the spot where I was, my strength failed me and I had like to have fallen. I have frequently been amazed that a sentiment deprived of all nourishment should have retained so much strength.

An incident, with which I had no concern, made me unexpectedly emerge from the profound obscurity in which I lived. A young girl, named Mademoiselle Tetar, excited the curiosity of the public by a pretended miracle that was wrought in her house. Every one went there. M. de Fontenelle, persuaded by M. le Duc d'Orléans, also went to see the marvel. It was said that he had not regarded the affair with the eyes of a philosopher; for this he was censured; and Madame la Duchesse du Maine, who seldom bethought herself to address me, said to me: "You ought really to apprise M. de Fontenelle of all that people are saying against him in relation to Mademoiselle Tetar." I wrote to him in fact, without thinking of aught but eliciting a response that might serve as an apology for him. He chanced to find himself

that same day at the house of the Marquis de Lassay, where those who were present indulged in some raillery on this subject; not finding it clever, he said to them: " This is better ", and shewed them my letter. It met with success; it was the event of the day; it was copied and ran all over Paris. I knew nothing of this, and was greatly astonished a few days later when, a large number of visitors coming to Sceaux to see a comedy played, each one discoursed to Madame la Duchesse du Maine of this letter. She had forgotten what she had said to me and knew not what they were talking of. She asked me if I had written it; I made answer yes. As soon as she had addressed me, all those that composed the company approached, and, in order to pay court to her, overwhelmed me with compliments; then, returning to her, congratulated her on having some one who could serve her in so delightful a manner. She had not discovered it, however, till then. She wished to see the letter and asked me for it. I had no copy of it, but every body present had one in his pocket. She read it, commended it and perceived that she might put me to greater use than she had done. I desired like the rest to have my letter, which I valued because of its issue. I saw by this that the merit of a thing lies not so much in its importance as in its opportuneness. Here it is:

The exploit of Mademoiselle Tetar makes less noise, Monsieur, than the report which you have made of it. The diversity of opinions which are held urge me to speak to you concerning them. Some people are astonished, and perhaps with reason, to find that the destroyer of oracles, that he who upset the tripod of the Sibyls, should fall on his knees before the bed of Mademoiselle Tetar. They affirm, but in vain, that it is the charms rather than the charm of the young lady that have thus moved him; neither the one nor the other can influence the philosopher. But 'tis the talk of the town. What! ery the critics, this man who has so clearly exposed the frauds perpetrated a thousand leagues away, and two thousand years before his time, has not been able to see through a trick hatched under his eyes! The partisans of antiquity, animated by an old resentment, join the charge. You see, they say, he wishes to rank modern miracles above ancient ones. Those of a more subtle turn aver that, as a good Pyrrhonist who finds everything uncertain, you believe everything possible. On the other hand, the devotees seem to be exceeding gratified at the homage which you pay to the devil; they hope that it may go farther. The women are prejudiced in your favour by the lack of mistrust you have shown toward the artifices of their sex. As for me, Monsieur, I suspend my judgment until I am better informed. I

but observe that the particular attention which every one bestows upon your smallest action is an incontrovertible proof of the esteem which the public has for you. And I perceive, even in its censure, something sufficiently flattering for me not to fear that I will be indiscreet in apprising you of it. If you repay my confidence by yours, I promise you to make good use of it.

I have the honour, etc.

I own that I experienced a vastly greater satisfaction from this feat, accomplished without design and with no cost to myself, than I could ever have obtained from a veritable effort: for not merely had I the first applause, but the curiosity which many had to know me procured for me several acquaintances and friends of distinction. But nothing gave me a more lively pleasure than this letter which I received from M. de Silly:

Fribourg, this 20th of December, 1713.

Your letter to M. de Fontenelle is as much talked of as the affair of Mademoiselle Tetar. It is the monument which ensures its memory. It is being spread amongst the most barbarous nations. All the Germans who are here wish to have copies of it. It is not kind of you to let me learn through the public of an occurrence that concerns you and gains for

you the approbation of all those from whom one is desirous of obtaining it. Treat me in the future with more confidence, and let me not learn from others that which will affect me so sensibly. Now that the decision of the public confirms what I have said to you so many times, you should be convinced of it. Farewell, Mademoiselle. Remember that I am here.

The success which I had thus won in the world having re-awakened his interest, he renewed correspondence with me, the more willingly that, being stationed in a German city where he was in command, and where he remained for three years, he wished to be instructed, by several sources, of that which was passing in France. He expressed to me the pleasure I gave him in sending him regularly all the news I could learn. I grew attentive to it, and I wrote to him with as much assiduity as circumspection. However, I used my endeavours to render my letters agreeable. His came to be such as one writes to one's man of business: "I received yours of such a date; continue to apprise me of all that occurs; you failed to inform me of such a thing"; nothing farther. Despite that, the writing, the seal, threw me into transports. I awaited with the most lively impatience the day, the hour, of their arrival, and I remember a dispute I had at Versailles with the porter, who brought me one

of his letters, and who would not take my money nor give me the letter because he had not, no more than I, any small change. In vain I told him I cared not that he should return me anything, he wished to go away and said to me coldly : " I shall return soon. " It was in the morning.

" Eh ! what ! " my companion said, wakened by the noise we made, " is not a letter as good at one hour as at another ? "

She parted generously with a few sous to keep us quiet and fell asleep again.

This sudden reputation drew, as I have said, the curious around me ; among others, the Abbé de Chaulieu, who came now and then to Sceaux, but who had never bethought himself to speak to me, wished to converse with me. The same fortune which had made me notable on a sudden upheld me during the examination ; it may have been the result of prepossession on the part of the others, or the desire on mine of retaining what chance had procured to me, but I acquitted myself creditably, as it seemed to me, to the mind of every one. I acquired upon this same occasion a steadfast friend, who never swerved from his regard for me ; this was M. de Valincourt, attaché of the Comte de Toulouse, distinguished for his wit, his merit and his friendships with the illustrious men of the past century. He wished to

make my acquaintance and sought me at Fontainebleau, whither we were gone; but it was not easy to discover me under the stairs, where I had taken up my abode. At length, being come to Sceaux one day, he found himself next to me at the play, and we entered into a discourse which seemed to me to give him pleasure. He came again to the play and I took care to keep the same place for him. He was touched by my consideration, and sometime afterward, finding I was at Versailles, he wrote to me, to beg permission to pay me a visit. I was not morose, I consented with exceeding good grace.

At this juncture, Madame la Duchesse du Maine engaged M. le Cardinal de Polignac, with whom she was on intimate terms, to construe for her in French his *Anti-Lucrèce*, written in Latin verse. She assembled every evening in her parlour a few select persons to listen to him. M. de Valincourt was among the number, and he came to await in my apartment the hour for this learned gathering. The reasons why I should be admitted to it were not yet strong enough to countervail those which excluded me from everything. Some time before, I had asked permission to assist at a reading, which took place at Sceaux, of the first volume of this work, translated by M. le Duc du Maine, and had the humiliation to obtain leave

to do so on condition that I should not appear. I ventured not again to make indiscreet proposals. The esteem of the people who were beginning to know me consoled me for the invincible disdain that the great shew to those whose position is so vastly inferior. But this scorn, which but strikes the condition of the lowly, often rebounds against the persons of the great, nor is the pomp which surrounds them always able to protect them from it. This reflection concerns not Madame la Duchesse du Maine, who ever had greater consideration for merit than other persons of her rank.

The little episode which I have described was the beginning for me of a more agreeable life in every respect. Her Serene Highness condescended to hold converse with me and grew accustomed to it. She was pleased with my responses, valued my approbation. I perceived even that she sought it, and that often when she talked her eyes would turn toward me and observe my attention. I gave it to her wholly and without effort: for no one ever discoursed with more discernment, with greater nicety and vivacity, nor in a manner more noble and unaffected. Her understanding made no use of turns nor conceits, nor of what one calls invention. Easily impressed with objects, it reflected them as if it were a mirror, without addition, or omission, or change of any sort. I expe-

rienced therefore much pleasure in listening to her; and after she perceived it, her liking for me increased.

Her family then had reached the highest eminence to which she could carry it. After her marriage with M. le Duc du Maine, she had busied herself continually with procuring for him and for her children a rank equal to her own; step by step they were arrived at all the honours of princes of the blood; and they had obtained through a fortunate conjunction the famous edict which placed them and their posterity in the line of succession to the crown. The precipitate loss of so many princes of the royal family had given occasion to and facilitated this project, which was put into execution at first without opposition and which gave birth afterward to so much. Her present prosperity, while it hid from view the fall that it was preparing for her, diffused joy in her court.

The Princess's taste for amusements was in full swing; and no one thought of anything but to give new spice to them and to render them more piquant. Comedies were played or rehearsed every day. Even the nights were put to use for diversions suitable to them. These were what were called the *grandes nuits*. Their beginning, as of everything, was extremely simple. Madame la Duchesse du Maine, who was unconscionable at late

hours, often spent the whole night at different games of hazard. The Abbé de Vaubrun, one of the courtiers most earnest to please her, conceived the idea of having, during one of the nights destined to be thus passed, some one appear in the guise of Night, enveloped in her crape, who would give thanks to the Princess for the preference which she accorded her over Day; the goddess was to have an attendant who would sing a pretty song on the same subject. The Abbé confided to me this secret, and engaged me to compose and speak the harangue, and to impersonate the nocturnal divinity. The surprise was the sole merit of this little diversion. My part was ill performed. The fright of speaking in public seized me, and I remembered little of what I had to say. However the idea of it met with applause and from this arose the magnificent fêtes given at night by different persons to Madame la Duchesse du Maine. I composed indifferent verses for some of these, the schemes for several others, and was consulted for all. I acted, I sang; but my fear spoiled everything, and they judged it better to use me solely as adviser, in which capacity I succeeded so happily that I acquired great reputation.

The last of these fêtes was entirely mine and given in my name, though I did not bear the costs. It represented Good Taste fled to Sceaux and pre-

siding over the various occupations of the Princess. First he led forth the Graces who prepared

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her toilette while dancing. Others sang songs with suitable words. This composed the first interlude. The second represented Play personified, bringing gaming tables, and arranging all that was needed for games of chance, the whole accompanied by songs and dances performed by the best actors from the Opera. The last interlude, after the recalls had been taken, represented Laughter who came to prepare a stage, on which was played a comedy in one act. I had been under the necessity of writing this myself, in default of finding a poet (for they wished it in verse) who would accept the like subject. It was the discovery which Madame la Duchesse du Maine claimed to have made of the magic square, to which she had been

devoting herself for some time with incredible ardour. The piece was played by her and others, each presenting his own character, which gave it a value despite the stupidity of the subject, and would have given me a value also, had not melancholy occurrences broken in suddenly upon our diversions and effaced even the memory of them.

However, the favour I had won in the world obtained for me a partial return to the good graces of the Duchesse de La Ferté. My first success piqued her; but at length public approbation revived hers, and this circumstance touched me most deeply. The mortification of being in ill favour with her had so shocked my sensibility that, so long as her resentment endured, I dreamed every night either of fresh spleen on her part or of a reconciliation with her. It is true I regained not her tenderness, but I saw her and she treated me with kindness and condescension. After my return to her good graces she said to me one day: "Well, my child, I never see any one but myself who is always in the right." This speech more than any precept taught me to mistrust myself, and I recall it whenever I am tempted to think that I am in the right.

I saw my sister after this with greater ease; my intercourse with her was sufficiently agreeable, though it was not without thorns. In short every-

thing was going rather better with me when that famous epoch arrived, which changed our whole mode of life.

The King, Louis XIV., had been wasting away for some time. No one wished to speak of it and every one affected not to believe it. However, Madame la Duchesse du Maine, always alert, even in the midst of the diversions and entertainments that seemed to occupy her exclusively, for the aggrandisement of the house into which she had married, and for the security of that grandeur, felt the importance in the present juncture of knowing what disposition the King had made. She urged M. le Duc du Maine to engage Madame de Maintenon, who retained the affection of a governess for the legitimized princes, to persuade the King to make them privy to his will, to the end that they might take proper measures and perhaps even induce him to put in motion during his life time the means most likely to render their elevation entirely stable. Madame de Maintenon demurred for fear of displeasing. Prevailed upon, however, by the solicitations of the Duc du Maine, she persuaded the King to consent that this prince and his brother should see the will, but on the condition that they should reveal no particular to any one whomsoever. They thought that this inviolable secrecy would

render any knowledge they might obtain futile, and declined to avail themselves of the permission. This was a grave mistake, of which Madame la Duchesse du Maine perceived the full significance. In order to try to repair it, a council was called in which the President de Mesmes, M. de Malesieu and M. de Valincourt appeared before the Duc and the Duchesse du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse. They decided that, as they could not again solicit the privilege they had declined, it was necessary at least to demand information concerning one important article. Opinions differed as to the choice of this. The one to which the Comte de Toulouse inclined, to know if the King had reinstated the King of Spain in the line of succession, carried the day.

They learned that he had not reinstated him, which fact assured beyond peradventure the power of the Duc d'Orleans, and it was evidently for the purpose of gaining favour with him that they informed him of it; a second error, not less prejudicial to the interests of these princes than the first : it was turning their discovery imprudently to the advantage of him who would profit by it at their expense.

The necessity of allying themselves with the Duc d'Orleans was obvious. Madame la Duchesse du Maine set it forth; the others would not listen

to it, averring that this alliance would displease the King.

The Duc d'Orleans, while yet ignorant of the future arrangements and doubtful of subverting them with the ease with which he did, had paid court to the Duc du Maine; he had even contemplated marrying his daughter, Mademoiselle de Valois, to the Prince de Dombes. The Duc de Brancas, one of his favourites, spoke to me of it long before the catastrophe and said that I should suggest the idea to Madame la Duchesse du Maine. I failed not to repeat to her what had been said to me, to which she seemed to pay but slight heed. Secret reasons rendered her cold to this proposition, which had been made to her and to the Duc du Maine from another source. Being neither the one nor the other then fully persuaded of the absolute authority which the Duc d'Orleans could not fail to have, and more impressed by the small inconveniences than the great advantages that would result from this alliance, they neglected, or, at least, used not their best endeavours to win the consent of the King, who was disinclined to it.

The Duc d'Orleans, repulsed by them and better informed, turned his energies in another direction. He designed to win the nobles of the kingdom. Prodigal of his promises, to which he

attached no value, he engaged to do everything they might demand of him when he should be ruler. He won over Parliament by such measures, and made use of a thousand secret intrigues to win for himself, in that body, creatures and friends who were later of the utmost service to him. The President was, to all appearances, entirely devoted to the house of Maine; which obtained from him, however, but little succour; he was an excellent courtier, but a mediocre man, possessed of wit and of an agreeable manner, weak, timorous, full of such defects as aid in pleasing and hinder from serving.

The King, languishing, at length fell dangerously ill. His loss premised so many ills to M. le Duc du Maine and his family that no one thought of anything else. Madame la Duchesse du Maine hurried to Versailles. Grief and uneasiness succeeded to the gaiety and entertainments that had followed one another until then. She saw Madame de Maintenon, and urged her to disclose what was so important for them to know. She would divulge nothing, nor listen to any measures that were proposed to her to suggest to the King for the confirmation of what he had decreed in favour of the legitimized princes. The anxiety of managing him, the fear of losing him, made his favourite indifferent at that juncture

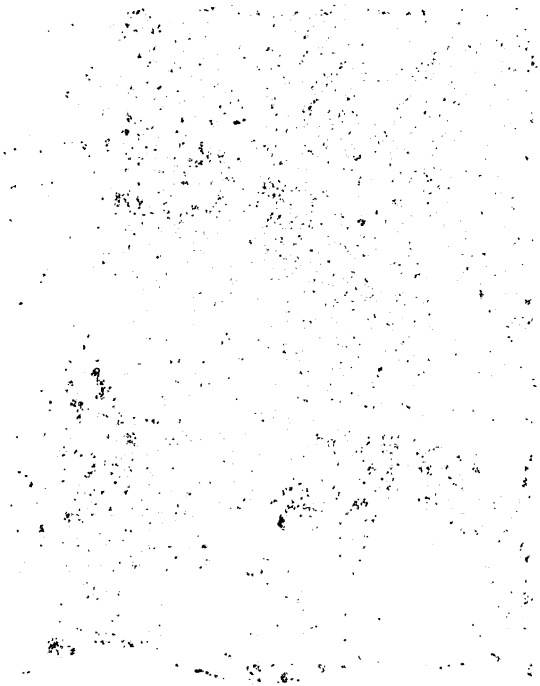
to every other interest. The King proceeded at his own request, however, during the course of his disorder, to confer on the Duc du Maine a distinction which piqued the Duc d'Orleans exceedingly. He had previously ordered a review of the troops of his household, and, not being able to be present on the day appointed, he had it conducted before the Duc du Maine. This overpowering honour seemed to presage his ruin and served perhaps to hasten it.

This Prince at length learned from the King himself, a few days before his death, of the dispositions in his will. It was too late then to make use of the knowledge. The Duc du Maine could but represent to the King the inconveniencies of the provisions he had made for him, and the displeasure they would arouse in the Duc d'Orleans, who would be in a position to increase his power too easily to be offended with impunity. The King persisted in leaving everything as it had been arranged by the will.

He had appointed a council of regency, of which he named the members, with the Duc d'Orleans as chief. Everything was to be decided by a plurality of votes. He intrusted to the council the guardianship of the youthful King, and gave the superintendence of his education, the care of his person, and the command of the troops of his

household, to the Duc du Maine. This authority would have put the duke in a position to protect himself, had he been able to retain it. But do we not know that the power of kings, however absolute it may be, doth not extend beyond the grave? Weary of obedience, one willingly escapes from laws, no longer enforced and rendered unstable by the interests of the new ruler.

Louis the XIV. died on the first of September, and parliament assembled on the following morning at the palace to determine the Regency. This was given, despite the dispositions to the contrary, to the Duc d'Orleans, with a Council of Regency, without which he could do nothing. Happy in being secure of the principal advantage, and agitated by his unexpected success, he so far injured his own cause in the discourse which he delivered on the subject, as to leave the whole power with the council. An able man devoted to the interests of the new Regent, and present at



Lewis XIV. died on the first of Septemb... parliament assembled on the following ... at the palace to determine the Regency. This was certainly due to the dispositions to the co... ary, to the Duc d'Orleans, with a Council of Regency, without which he could do nothing. ... y in being secure of the principal authority, elated by his unexpected success, he ... exerted himself in the discourse which he ... subject, as to leave the whole ... council. An able man devoted ... interests of the new Regent, and present ...

THE RECONCILIATION

the assembly, saw the blunder that he was making, and conveyed to him adroitly a note, in which he pointed out to him that he would be lost if he did not break up the session. It was postponed on some pretext till after dinner. The Duc d'Orleans profited by the interval to consult with his friends. They prepared for him a discourse in which he represented the inconveniences of dividing the authority, and the necessity of allowing it to reside wholly in his person, engaging, however, to take no step in affairs of state but with the deliberation of the council of regency, which was to be composed according to his wishes, while he was to be left absolute master of the distribution of favours.

All this passed, and it was on this occasion he said that he was enraptured to find himself barred from evil while free for good.

During the same session it was settled that the Duc du Maine should have the superintendence of the education of the King; but, upon fresh representations of the Duc d'Orleans, it was decided that he should not be given the command of the troops of the household.

Some of the members of the parliament represented that they could not dispense with giving to the superintendent of the education of the King the command of the watch, that is to say of the guard that serves daily about him, as he could not

otherwise be held responsible for the King's safety. This contested point was also refused. The Duc du Maine demanded that he should then be discharged, by the act that placed him near the King, of the responsibility of his person. At first he obtained this article; but afterward they represented to him that it would be unseemly for parliament to give him any such discharge, and he yielded. Thus stript of all authority, this precious charge, which he retained but for a short time, was of no advantage to him. The young King, holding a Bed-of-Justice some days after, confirmed all that parliament had done.

Madame la Duchesse du Maine was desirous of being in Paris at this important juncture. She found herself there without an habitation; she had never had any other but the lodging of the Grand Commander in Chief of the Artillery at the Arsenal, and this had been demolished a short time before, in order to be rebuilt. She borrowed therefore the Hotel de Mesmes, belonging to the president; and, as there was not sufficient lodging for all her suite, she left me at Versailles. I made her aware of the disappointment I felt at not being near her under the present circumstances, and demanded, in order that I might follow her, if she would give me leave to seek some friend in the neighbourhood, who would give me lodging. She

acquiesced with pleasure. I addressed myself to that companion of the convent who had brought me to Paris, and who had promised that her house should be mine as soon as her marriage took place. It had taken place, and she refused to give me shelter for a few days. My lack of experience of the world allowed me to feel surprised at her proceeding. I have since learned not to be so easily astonished. A brother of Madame de Grieu, who lodged with one of his nieces in that quarter, offered me a room, which I accepted. I had expected nothing from him. I had this surprise to set off against the other, which it balanced. I remained there but a few days, Madame la Duchesse du Maine having found at the Hotel de Mesmes a sort of cellar where she tucked me away.

The uneasiness which the present events occasioned her made her lose sleep. The woman who told her stories to put her to sleep not being adequate to the task, she proposed to me to read to her during the night. I accepted with pleasure this arduous office, regarding it as a means of gaining her confidence, and of obtaining for myself greater esteem and approbation. I was not deceived on this score; but I found my strength disproportioned to this onerous exercise, which was repeated every night, without interruption.

The Princess found that I read well and dis-

coursed not ill. She fell into the way of talking to me; entirely absorbed by the affairs of her family, she made them the one subject of these nocturnal conversations. The accomplishments, the projects, the grievances, the regrets, everything entered into them. This full confidence, although I might ascribe it less to abundance of tenderness than to abundance of ideas, affected me sensibly. A simple manifestation of esteem and friendship, especially on the part of the great, rarely fails to win us. I became genuinely attached to the princess, and I devoted myself with the less reserve to the task of pleasing her that she never exacted anything of me not in accord with the esteem I desired from her.

We did not remain for a great while in the Hotel de Mesmes. The King was first at Vincennes, but before long the Court was established at Paris. As M. le Duc du Maine was still charged with the superintendence of his Majesty's education, he had the right of lodging at the Tuileries. Madame la Duchesse du Maine also had an apartment there, whither we went to live. There were for her suite but two large rooms, which were shared by her women. Agreeably to my usual lot I had a tiny nook, without light and without heat, save that which penetrated from a common ante-chamber; but I was at Paris, where I had ever wished to live, and

despite the inconvenience of my habitation, I saw excellent company there. Since I have been in a situation to receive my friends comfortably, I no longer see any one. But I was young then; and that counts for more than one gains in losing that precious advantage.

The Abbé de Chaulieu, who felt for me as lively a passion as one can experience at eighty, reproached me a little with coquetry. I assured him this was but owing to the necessity I was under of pleasing in order to make my friends sustain the rigour of my lodging. If I had not put so much affability into my manners, every one would have deserted me. I gave him my word, and I have kept it, that so soon as I had a window and a fireplace I would renounce all effort to appear obliging.

This poor Abbé, who was so infatuated, bestowed upon me in his mind whatever charms were qualified to attract him, and, no longer counting upon his own power of pleasing, sought to render himself amiable by his complaisance and his assiduity in forestalling all my desires. He had lost none of the charm of his understanding, and I give as proof these verses which I believe were the last he ever wrote. The portrait resembles me neither in the evil nor in the good that he says of me; but 'tis plain that his fervour supplied to

his imagination whatsoever age might have taken from it.

EPISTLE

Thou, Launay, hast in high degree
The spell all hearts to subjugate;
Within thy very faults lies subtle witchery.
Midst shifting pleasures thou canst be,
Yet thy discretion ne'er abate,
E'en to a lover's jealous eye.
Coquette, deceiver, rake perchance, who knows?
What odious names soe'er this verse on thee bestows,
I fain just now would have the world detest thee;
My heart finds naught to love, once 'scaped beyond thy smile,
Yet by thy strange and wondrous wile
The traits that in another would be guile,
With sovereign loveliness but re-invest thee!

Yet do I owe thee much! Without thee indolence
Had crowned my failing days, to ennui preordained;
By nature's law was I constrained
To feel naught save indifference.
But thou, by means unknown, new energy supplied
To this machine almost outworn,
The springs with motion vivified;
And then within my heart there once again was born
The fire of youth, and I was caught in Love's strong tide.

But I, indeed, did struggle 'gainst this fantasy,
Did seek to combat my desires to age unfit.
'Twas then too late! Already by thy subtlety
The poison I had drunk, the poison which thy wit
Has taught thee to compound with so great potency.
No longer could my will to Reason's yoke submit
When she at length awoke, and chid my peccancy.

There's no resisting thee! E'er we had met, I knew
That some mysterious force my inclinations drew
Toward thee. Thine understanding then received my
Thy reputation had alone [praise;
Been my informant; had forsooth the seedlings sown
With which I found my heart o'ergrown,
And which bore fruit of love beneath thy quick'ning gaze.
Whene'er thou did'st appear I sought thee through the
[maze:
A charm more potent far than beauty forged the chain
Whose secret links imposed a sweet captivity,
So dear, so light that I would fain
Thus forevermore remain,
Stript of repose and liberty.

Ah! who but thou the mind's o'ermastering charm can
And wisdom's brightest radiance? [shew,
Of all that study can bestow
Thou wouldst, forsooth, affect a seeming ignorance;
'Tis but the most consummate art
Which seeks to moderate thy wit's exuberance:
Such grace thou dost thereby impart
To all thy learning, that the most
Abstract of Sciences, inert,
Acquires a new significance.
Imagination strews its flowers with lavish hand,
And decks with bloom thy least discourse;
Yet fancy's all disturbing force
Thy well-poised Reason doth withstand.
O'er all thy person this, thy fine intelligence
Diffuses greater charm, than any words express,
These gifts of Nature's opulence
All we, who love thee, know and hail with gratefulness.

Is't not enough? The tones of an alluring voice
Each moment set my ardent soul aflame
With music, which became
A fair enchanting dream, making my verse rejoice.

Oh! happy days, oh! days serene, where are ye sped,
When many conquests crowned my brow
With wreaths entwined from leafy bay and myrtle bough?
Oh! youth of pleasure, golden days, ye now are dead;
And fast advancing age doth rend
All hope, that thou to me love's guerdon wilt extend.
Hope being thus at end,
I ne'er desired, nor sought, thy conqueror to be,
And eager but to please, I still have held as naught
The bliss, now strange to me, from mutual passion [caught
My soul content with but the joy of loving thee.
I spoke to thee of love: didst deign my tale to hear;
Too brief, alas! the days for all we had to say!
No blessing in my path e'er lay
That so alluring did appear,
Such ecstacy excite, as these vain fancies gay.
Ah! happy he on whom kind Heaven doth confer
A heart so tender and sincere
That he the joy of love, though unreturned, can feel,
And know wherefore I hold more dear
My lot than those on whom success has set its seal.

HYMN TO LOVE

Thy vict'ry o'er my trembling heart,
Blind Cupid, I would sing.
New strength to memory impart
Of thy last offering,
As captive, let me bring
Unto my gracious king
This tribute from my minstrel art.

My heart thy mother hath obeyed
In yielding to the grace

My mistress owns. Thou'st lent thine aid
Her charms to interlace;
Hast forged me chains apace,
Dear chains which I embrace —
Ne'er Venus lighter fetters made.

Thy very torments have a zest
And ecstacy excite.
Since thus from sorrow thou canst wrest
Such rapturous delight,
Oh! bid the beauty bright
That brought me to this plight
Lay down her arms at thy behest.

Come, dearest tyrant of my life!
Thou only know'st the way
My soul in bondage without strife
To hold. Ah! that I may
In life and death ne'er stray
Beyond my Lesbia's sway
Where no dissension e'er is rife.

Thou comest, heedless of all pains
To hear my vows enrolled!
Already do I feel thy chains
About me tighter hold.
More love a thousand fold
I feel than that of old
Fair Helen roused in Trojan veins.

This is the fitting recompense
For all the ills I've borne.
Since childhood's days of innocence
Thy fetters I have worn.
To shew the world, I've sworn,
That of all might I'm shorn —
Proclaiming thy omnipotence.

The Abbé often proposed to add presents to the incense he offered me. Wearied one day with his lively importunities to accept of a thousand pistoles, I said to him :

" In return for your bounteous offers, I advise you not to make similar ones to many women : you might find one who would take you at your word.

" Oh ", replied he, " I know very well whom I have to deal with. "

This simple response made me laugh.

He often exhorted me to make myself fine and sought to shame me into dressing better.

" Abbé ", returned I, " I find myself decked with all I lack. "

Having no other resource but his assiduity, he redoubled it incessantly. He wrote me every morning and came to wait upon me every day, provided that I allowed him. The letter was to learn my wishes, and, if I preferred his equipage to his person, he sent it to me without a murmur and I made what use of it I pleased. I held despotic sway over his entire household. One seldom possesses authority without abusing it : I exercised mine in behalf of a small footman who brought me his letters. He came one day to apprise me that his master had dismissed him. I said to him without informing myself whether he was in the right or the wrong :

" Return to him and say that you are to remain, for such is my pleasure. "

He took him back submissively. My protégé graced not my protection; he did everything as ill as possible and no one ventured to reprove him.

When I wished to go to sup at the Temple with the Abbé, or with the Grand Prior, the former gathered there, at his risk and peril, the most agreeable company and any one whom I might desire. In short, he had no thought but to fill my life with all the entertainment of which it was susceptible; and he taught me that there is nothing more delightful than to be loved by one who no longer thinks of himself and who expects nothing from you.

I also saw M. de Valincourt nearly every day, who showed a veritable fondness for me, without assuming a tone of gallantry. The great esteem I felt for him led me often to display a preference for him : the others were piqued by this and interpreted it according to their fancy, which, however, I did not consider myself under the necessity of respecting. Among these was R..., who, in making the tour of the world, had reached me with his comedy, real or pretended, of a serious passion. Transports, uneasinesses, jealousy, reproaches, nothing was wanting; and all so prettily performed that the play became in-

teresting. His conversation, and, above all, his letters, which were better than any I have ever seen of the kind, diverted me infinitely. I must own that it is flattering to be loved by a person whom we don't love in return, and to whom we dissemble not our indifference.

I had yet other agreeable company. M. de Fontenelle, who never paid any visit save to his own neighbours, waited upon me very frequently. The Duc de Brancas, whose lively and brilliant imagination begot in him so many singularities, paid me some homage. I had subdued the ferocity of Toureil; he was not rude to me. Many others, whom I cannot recall at the moment, were earnest to wait upon me. The society and the complaisance of so many men of parts and of unlike temper furnished variety and entertainment in my life, without introducing the least uneasiness into it, and I should have relished it, had it not been marred by the fatigue of my watches and by the persecutions of my jealous companions, who, not content with wresting from me by their pranks the little rest I could snatch during the day or night, forced me to dismiss, one after another, the greater number of those who visited me, in order to be free from their criticisms. In vain I was told that it was acquiescing in the censure, and that to break up the intercourse was but to render it sus-

pected; I knew that those intimacies one ought to renounce, one doth not renounce, and that no proof of indifference was so manifest as the one I gave.

Before passing to more important matters I take up that which I have left unsaid concerning M. de Silly. He returned from Germany without apprising me of the fact or giving me any sign of life. Before the death of the King, I encountered at Versailles one of his servants, whom I knew. I enquired in what country was his master, from whom I had had no news for a great while. He told me that he had returned some months ago. I thus perceived that he treated me like an old gazette for which one has no further use. The indignation I felt at this lowered him in my affections, and the circumstances which followed, joined to the distractions attendant upon them, drove him somewhat from my mind. Finally the approbation I accorded myself, upon the testimony of so many others, made me disrelish esteeming so highly one who esteemed me not.

However, the undying fondness that I had for him but changed its form; from its ruins sprang the tender and perfect friendship I have ever retained for him and which has ever hindered me from giving any one the preference over him. He had taken a house at Paris; the Marquise de Silly

had left her community, and the two lived together. Whether on an invitation, or not, I do not remember, I went to see her, and I saw him. He came also to me at the Tuilleries, but rarely. His friendship with the Regent and his political fanaticism made him fear all appearance of connection with our family. The Abbé de Chaulieu, whom nothing escaped, finding him one day with me, discerned at once what he was to me; his great sagacity in matters of sentiment led him to recognize mine, how much soever it was changed. He derived from this knowledge a new and singular means of pleasing me, in proposing to me parties to which he invited M. de Silly, in order to make them infinitely agreeable to me. I recall among others a dinner he gave to us with Mademoiselle de Vauvray in the house of the Grand Prior at Clichy, at which I diverted myself extremely. My diminished sensibility permitted me to relish simple pleasures, such as a beautiful day, a delightful place and excellent company.

My favour with the Princess waxed greater, owing to the perplexities into which she fell. The Duc d'Orleans had pledged himself to everything so long as he had been apprehensive of everything; he had engaged in a promise to M. le Duc, who was offended at the rank and prerogatives of the legitimized princes, to abolish the act that

put them in possession of these privileges. But, not wishing the affair to be carried before the assembly of Parliament, nor before the Bed-of-Justice which was to determine the Regency, for fear of occasioning complications prejudicial to his interests, he gave M. le Duc to understand that he could contemplate nothing at that juncture but to secure the power of His Royal Highness, which, once well established, would put him in a position to fulfil all that he had promised him. M. le Duc consented to this delay; but, so soon as he saw the Regency placed unconditionally in the hands of the Duc d'Orleans, he claimed the performance of his promise, and purposed to present a petition, in which he besought the King to be pleased to hold a Bed-of-Justice to revoke the edict placing the legitimized princes, in default of legitimate princes, in the line of succession to the crown, and the act that gave them the rank and honours of princes of the blood.

The Regent, who still observed precautionary measures in his dealings with the Duc du Maine, as much for political reasons as out of consideration for Madame d'Orleans, apprised her of the design of M. le Duc, assuring her that he would not lend himself to it. This princess acquainted the princes her brothers with it.

At this time, the Comte d'Eu having attained

the age of fifteen when, according to the prerogative of princes of the blood, he might enter parliament, the Duc d'Orleans became apprehensive lest this new declaration of a right whose abolishment M. le Duc was demanding might make that prince, whom he was seeking to restrain, fly into a passion. He begged therefore the Duc du Maine to defer this step, promising that he should lose nothing by so doing, that the Comte d'Eu should not be treated differently from his brother, and assuring him that he, the Regent[1], would not be unmindful of his complaisance. Although the Duc du Maine saw the danger, he yielded, as one ever yields to one's master.

The great law suit which had been instituted on the succession of M. le Prince against Madame la Duchesse du Maine and the Princesses, her sisters, and which M. le Duc had lost a short while before, besides the resentment it had aroused, still occasioned many disputes between him and the Princesses, his aunts, in regard to the division of the property of the house of Condé. In the course of this affair there was question of a contract which M. le Duc had to enter into with the Duc du Maine, and the latter assuming, as was his custom, the style of a

1. Louis-Henri, Duc de Bourbon.

prince of the blood, M. le Duc would only sign the act under a protest, which he published, signifying his disapproval of the style aforesaid. This was the first signal for the struggle between the legitimate and the legitimized princes.

In order to stifle it in the beginning, M. le Duc du Maine deemed it best to lend himself to all that M. le Duc desired relative to their affairs of business, and he urged Madame la Duchesse du Maine to accept the disadvantageous proposals that had been made to her, respecting her portion. Although she would thus be cheated out of half of her property, she consented with a good grace, in order to facilitate the accomodation of the other points which he was negotiating with M. le Duc du Maine.

M. le Duc agreed to withdraw his protest, consented that the legitimized princes should assume the style of Princes of the blood, save in contracts which they entered into with him; promised not to assail them without the permission of the Regent, and not to incite the dukes nor others to assail them. This compact was communicated to the Duc d'Orleans, who, knowing that he had already given his consent to M. le Duc to persecute the legitimized princes, pointed out to the Duc du Maine that he ought not to put any faith in the conditions of the treaty, and still

less to sacrifice any large interests to it. But this prince, unwilling to believe that M. le Duc would give his word and then not keep it, paid no heed to this warning; the compromise relating to the portion of Madame la Duchesse du Maine was drawn up according to the conditions proposed by M. le Duc; it was signed and placed in the keeping of Madame la Princesse. The protest of M. le Duc was withdrawn and he observed all the terms of the agreement.

This peace was not of long duration. An old decree produced on the occasion of some family business, in which M. le Duc du Maine had used the style of a Prince of the blood in dealing with M. le Duc, rekindled the quarrel which the latter was but waiting to renew. M. le Duc demanded that the decree should be revoked, and protested that he would not allow the edict of 1714 and the act of 1715 in favour of the legitimized princes to stand, except so long as they took no advantage of them. " If they sleep we shall sleep ", said Madame la Duchesse du Maine; " if they wake we shall wake. " Madame la Princesse, fearing lest they might repudiate the document which had been placed in her hands, had it confirmed by Parliament.

M. le Duc, perceiving that the legitimized princes would not of themselves give up the

advantages which they enjoyed, presented, together with the Comte de Charolois and the Prince de Conti, his petition, according to his original design. The legitimized princes, on their side, presented another, demanding that the affair should be postponed till the majority of the King, hoping by this delay to establish themselves securely in possession of their rights and to find then a more favourable tribunal. The Regent seemed at first to approve this expedient; but the instability of his ideas never allowed him to hold to the first, which was ever the best that he had, and he appointed commissioners to try this grave suit, averring that he could not leave undecided, for so great a while, a dispute which was productive of so many complications.

There then appeared a multitude of printed pamphlets to prove or refute the claims of one side and the other. The matter was only touched upon in these, but it was treated exhaustively in the great Memoir of the legitimized princes, which was composed under the supervision of Madame la Duchesse du Maine by the Cardinal de Polignac, M. de Malesieu and M. Davisard; the latter was attorney general to the parliament of Toulouse, and had newly been presented to M. le Duc du Maine as a man of very excellent parts and of a superior talent for business.

Madame la Duchesse du Maine herself contributed largely to this work, not only by what she drew from her own knowledge, but by her laborious researches. The greater part of the night was employed in these. The immense piles of volumes on her bed which looked like mountains aboût to overwhelm her, made her, so she said, appear on a smaller scale like Encelade buried beneath Mount Etna. I assisted in this work, and rummaged in the old chronicles and the jurisconsults, both ancient and modern, till excess of fatigue disposed the Princess to take some rest. Then I read to her to put her to sleep, and afterward departed in search of rest myself, which I rarely found.

The desire to enrich this work with everything that could give it value made her collect instances and authorities favourable to her cause from all sides. Thousands of obscure people proffered their services for these researches, and came to bring her their insignificant discoveries. Most of them were referred to me, or directed at least to address themselves to me. One among these, who was famous for his great learning (it was Boivin the elder, more Hebrew than French, better versed in the customs of the Chaldeans than in those of his own country and unacquainted with any court save that of Semiramis) requested to introduce his ancient treasures into our Court, though they were

of little use to the matter in hand. Instances drawn from the family of Nimrod would scarce have been conclusive for that of Louis XIV. However, a day was appointed and he was told to come to me. When he arrived, I was assisting at the toilet of Madame la Duchesse du Maine. Some one came to apprise me. She said to me: " Don't go away; you may bid him enter, I will see him. " He entered her presence, preoccupied with the notion that he was being taken to the rooms of one of her waiting women. The gilt decorations, the array of her toilet, the number of attendants who waited upon her, nothing could distract him from his original idea. He conversed with her, addressed her always as Mademoiselle, and departed without surmising that he had discoursed with any one but me.

This traffic in erudition brought me into relation with all kinds of people. One of the most pertinacious was an Abbé le Camus, whom a would-be countess, — in reality a beggar, — introduced to us. Both of these persons played a part in our great drama, little worthy as they were to appear in it by reason of their dullness. Among these literati a gentleman, who had formerly been a monk, was also presented, pamphlets in hand, by the above mentioned countess. She persuaded him that, if he wished to have these appreciated,

he must give me a supper at his house. I could not escape it. I went thither with our starveling countess, who could scarce restrain herself on finding she was about to sup. The company I found in that house belonged to a different world from ours. On the countenance of the host, who was rich and miserly, was depicted the grief he felt at having to provide us with entertainment. Mine was not less; and my weariness became such that, not knowing what to do, I began to mend the fire which was poor. I seized with a pair of tongs something which my treacherous eyesight made me take for a brand out of its place, and I put it hastily behind a smouldering log. It was a chocolate pot, very black and full of chocolate. It had never occurred to me to imagine such a treat which was as much out of place there as the supposed brand. The spilling of the liquid quenched the fire together with the

joy of our guests, and threw our host into extreme consternation. I said to him to console him, that we could do very well without chocolate after supper. I believe he would have given his life rather than have so unlucky an accident befall him.

I assisted, in company with the countess and the Abbé, at another party even more fantastic than this one. They took me to see a woman who, they averred, was in possession of most important secrets. She was intimate with the Abbé de Verac, who had written both for or against M. le Duc, and from whom, according to them, we might obtain much information. Madame la Duchesse du Maine listened to all their counsels, after the fashion of those invalids, who, not content with consulting the most skilled physicians, hearken also to the imposters, and she despatched me to reconnoitre. I obtained nothing from the woman Du Puy ('twas thus she styled herself) but an absolute conviction of the futility of all commerce with her.

Our friends returned to the charge, and asserted that she discoursed at table like Pythia on the tripod. All of their intrigues were directed toward securing a good meal at free cost. I was condemned to sup with this troupe of brigands. I was taken to a tennis court, the scene of the festivity, a build-

ing half in ruins. I traversed dark and devious ways and crossed gaping floors. The dangerous passages made me grow apprehensive. I knew not whether I was being conducted to a vigil, or whether I might not meet with an assassin, or something worse. The assembly, when I joined it, scarce reassured me; it seemed to me composed of persons fit for mysterious offices. The songs with which they enlivened the repast accorded not less with this notion. The wine which the woman Du Puy drank did not make her reveal any of her profound secrets. She reappeared again later at our house with her ambiguous discourse, of which we never had any eclaircissement. She was perhaps a spy. Whatever she may have been, her artifices came to naught. I only make this mention of her because she was quoted in the evidence of our great case.

The Memoir on the suit of the legitimized princes was finished. It was well written, but its success did not correspond to the pains it had cost. The suit was tried and lost; the edict which had placed them in the line of succession to the crown was revoked, as was also the enactment which conferred upon them the style of princes of the blood. They were only permitted to retain the rank and honours which they had previously enjoyed by virtue of their ancient patents. The pre-

rogative of crossing the floor of parliament was reserved during their lifetime to the Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse. By this decree of 1717, an old law, which gave to them and their posterity an intermediate rank in parliament, was allowed to stand. The Prince de Dombes was deprived of the rank which he held, apparently to fulfil the promise made by the Regent, that the lot of the two brothers should be equal.

What grief for Madame la Duchesse du Maine to see the humiliation of her family, the destruction of the edifice which she had laboured all her life to build up, and the triumph of those by whom it had been overthrown! It is almost impossible, in so violent a state of agitation, to constrain oneself to inaction. Ill-treated in France, Madame la Duchesse du Maine thought to obtain support from the King of Spain. The piety of this prince, who was ruled by a Jesuit, led her to conceive the idea of entering into relations with his director. She proposed to me to sound Father Tournemine on this subject, whom I had formerly known in the province, and who paid her from time to time his duty. I was not privileged to make any representations to Her Highness; blind obedience was my sole obligation. I obeyed therefore and sought the reverend father. I laid before him the ideas which were under consideration with as much dex-

terity as I could. He grasped at them eagerly, and told me that he had a friend, a man of quality, a foreigner, who was obliged to go to Spain on some private affairs, in whom one might put absolute confidence and intrust with the most delicate negotiations, as he was capable of acquitting himself well in them; that, if this means were agreeable to Madame la Duchesse du Maine, he would send him to me, and I might present him to her; that he himself would give him letters for Spain, and that Her Serene Highness might charge him with all that she saw fit to send to that country.

I repeated this conversation to Madame la Duchesse du Maine. The Father's proposal pleased her, and I returned to apprise him of the fact. He sent his man to me. He was the Baron de Walef. He was presented to the Princess on the footing of a wit who was desirous of showing her some poetry of his own making. In fact he contrived to write some verses. She had several private interviews with him and charged him with her instructions, expressly recommending him not to go beyond them. She wished then only to engage the King of Spain to espouse the cause of M. le Duc du Maine and his oppressed family. The Baron was to see Cardinal Alberoni, the prime minister, and to ascertain how far he would forward the affair, and prepossess the King, his master, in fa-

vour of it, by reason of his near relationship, and out of respect for the wishes of the late King his grand-father, infringed without consideration.

They concerted the manner in which the baron should give an account of his negotiation. I proposed that the letters which he was to write should be addressed to me, to the end that Madame la Duchesse du Maine might be less involved. They were to contain but general news, but he was provided with white ink, wherewith to write of secret matters between the lines. I was furnished with the like for the replies which I was charged to make to him. He said that, for the sake of greater safety, he would convey his letters to me through a woman, who lived in Paris, and who was totally at his devotion.

After all these measures had been taken, and we believed that he was gone, he returned to me and told me that he had counted upon a sum of money for his journey which had failed him, and proposed to me to sell some trinkets which he had. I repeated this to Madame la Duchesse du Maine. She understood that he wished money and gave him a hundred louis. He departed and took the route to Italy, where he pretended that he had some preliminary affairs, and whence he was to embark for Spain. The issue of this fine embassy will be found almost exact in the declaration I

made concerning the subject. I was careful therein to speak nothing but truth, being persuaded that, when one finds oneself under the necessity of deviating from the verity, it is none the less best to hold to it as nearly as one can. 'Tis the safest and most honest course. It is, however, possible to diffuse light and shade over the facts one exposes in such a manner as to change their appearance without altering their form. This was what I sought to compass in that production. It will be found in its proper place. 'Tis not worth while to descant at greater length here, on what it treats with sufficient particularity.

Madame la Duchesse du Maine was too disturbed in mind to content herself with the simple step which had for its end to engage the King of Spain to undertake by means of negotiation the defense of the Duc du Maine, and to defend what the late King had done in his favour.

Several of the most powerful nobles of the kingdom had maintained that the affair of the legitimized princes should not be decided without their intervention. A protest was drawn up on the subject and signed by many people of condition. This induced Madame la Duchesse du Maine to attach herself to some of them. She knew that they were, for the most part, ill content with the government, complained bitterly of it and con-

templated its overthrow. As one advances toward the light, however faint, that shines in the mist of thick darkness, she sought these persons, perceiving confusedly that she might derive advantage from them. Two of the principal ones, the Comte de Laval and the Marquis de Pompadour, were introduced to her. They were in league with the Prince de Cellamare, ambassador from Spain, and claimed that they would be enabled to attempt great things by means of his assistance. They engaged Madame la Duchesse du Maine to see him in a little house which she possessed at the Arsenal. She betook herself to it with but a small escort; and Laval, acting as coachman, conducted thither the ambassador at night. This was repeated a second time, and not without the Regent's knowledge, who began from that moment to look with distrust upon these furtive proceedings.

I forbear explaining their plan, because I never in the least understood it; and neither perhaps did they. All that I could disentangle was that they wished to dissuade the King of Spain from joining the quadruple alliance, too advantageous to the Duc d'Orleans, and to engage him to demand a session of the States General to limit the authority of the Regent and to check the abuses of his government. Madame la Duchesse du Maine insisted but on the first article. She represented to

Prince Cellamare the dangerous consequence of the accession of the King of Spain. This was the chief subject of her interviews with him. She confided to this minister a memoir excellently well written, which she had composed herself, solely concerning this matter, and conveyed it in safety to his court.

M. de Laval and M. de Pompadour wrote several pamphlets as false in their facts as in their inferences. They advanced as truths anything that came into their heads, promising the intervention and support of numbers of people who were totally ignorant of their designs, but who, on chimerical conjecture, they thought like to take part. Madame la Duchesse du Maine disapproved of their dreams, and lent herself to them, not from lack of understanding, but from the affliction of her soul that placed her under the necessity of acting, even when her enterprises had no definitive aim.

Prince Cellamare, who had sanctioned the design of having his master demand a session of the States General of France, wished to have a draft of the letters which the King of Spain should write on this subject, the one to the King, the other to Parliament. Madame la Duchesse du Maine commanded M. de Malesieu to prepare this in company with Cardinal de Polignac. The original of

this production, written in both their hands, should, without doubt, have been burned. The Cardinal, who was in haste to betake himself to the royal mass, recommended Madame la Duchesse du Maine to destroy it at once. The copying of it being finished, M. de Malesieu took possession of it with this intent, but either because it occurred to him to preserve it, or because he forgot it, he could not find the document when he came to put it in a place of safety. He was mightily disturbed at this loss, but gave no sign of it at that time, and every one believed that the important paper was no longer in existence.

Madame la Duchesse du Maine had told me nothing of this. She confided to me many things and concealed numerous others. I did not invite her weighty confidences, of which I foresaw the issue so clearly that I sought now and then to make her also aware of it. But, when I said to her that she would get herself imprisoned, she only laughed, pursued her schemes and feared nothing save the resistance of M. le Duc du Maine in lending himself to them.

The favour which I enjoyed with her shielded me not from a storm which had like to have separated us altogether. Finding myself a little out of order one evening, I threw myself down on my bed while awaiting the hour when I must begin

my watch. They came to call me to assist in undressing her. I asked if she had need of my particular services, which consisted in writing, seeking some book, or other object committed to my care. I was told it was but for her toilette. The little that I had to do with this led me to believe that I might continue to take a little rest. Her Serene Highness sent for me again and administered a very curt reproof for the dispensation I had accorded myself. She said to me that she kept her women to serve her and not to form an academy. This tone, which she had never before used toward me, piqued me. I answered that I had so little talent as lady's maid that she could scarce chance upon a worse person for that office. My reply vexed her, and what she said to me, all of which I have forgotten, gave me occasion to retire. She did not send for me that night at the accustomed hour, and I employed it in preparations for my departure, firmly resolute to quit her. Worn out with fatigue, disheartened by annoyances, I had only been upheld by the consideration I had enjoyed with her; since that was wanting to me, the rest was insupportable.

I had newly taken a maid for my own service and on my own account, as the one who waited upon us in common was a perpetual source of dissension. Mine, Rondel by name, was an extreme-

ly sensible girl. I told her what had passed and charged her to arrange for my removal. However, not wishing to take such a step without the advice and approbation of my friends, I went at break of day to M. de Valincourt, whose prudence and good offices were essential to me in this juncture. He felt with me that I should not allow myself to be ill treated, and approved my design of retiring to a convent. I had not, it is true, the means of living there for a great length of time, but I flattered myself that he and my other friends would find me a place more endurable than the one I was abandoning.

To give a more seemly appearance to my retirement, I went that very morning to the house of Madame de Chambonnas, maid of honour to Madame la Duchesse du Maine. I told her that I had only been sustained in the toilsome life I led by the kindness of Her Serene Highness, and that, seeing myself deprived of that, I could no longer support the weight of my burden; that I besought her to obtain the consent of Madame la Duchesse du Maine to my withdrawing into a convent. My intent was never to shew myself again. But the maid of honour informed me that no one retired in that manner; that I must return to the Tuilleries (she did not herself lodge there); that she would speak to Her Serene Highness and convey

to me her answer. I returned then to my lodging, that I might act with propriety; and I thought that I should not do ill to write to the Cardinal de Polignac who had expressed esteem and friendship for me, giving him an account of my resolution and of the motives which had induced me to take it. Having dispatched this letter, I awaited the result with complacency.

That very evening Madame de Chambonnas sent for me to go to her in Her Serene Highness's closet, where she awaited me. She was charged to appease and retain me. She acquitted herself but ill. She had no great genius for diplomacy. She knew as little of people as of affairs. Instead of soothing, with assurances of esteem and consideration, a spirit wounded by neglect, she did nought but portray my helplessness and poverty as justifying the insult I had received.

" You have apparently counted ", said she to confound me, " on receiving a pension; you will not have one. "

I replied that I had counted on nothing.

" How will you live? " cried she.

" That is my affair ", said I, " Madame, I shall encumber no one; but, come what may, I shall not expose myself farther to mortifications which I do not merit, and which I know not how to bear. "

She left me and went to give an account of the ill success of her mission.

Madame la Duchesse du Maine, not wishing me to quit her, — either from a general dislike to parting with what she had, or because, not knowing me sufficiently well, she feared for the secrets she had confided to me, — gave the task of luring me back to a more adroit hand than that of Madame de Chambonnas.

The Cardinal de Polignac doubtless shewed her the letter I had written him, and made her understand that, if she wished to keep me, it could only be by good treatment, and by putting me on another footing in the household. He came while the company were at supper to seek me in my chamber; told me that he wished me to come at once with him to Madame la Duchesse du Maine, who was above; that he required that I should make her some apology; that he undertook not merely that I should be well received, but that in a very little time she would take me from the place I held about her, and give me a more agreeable position; that it was not seemly for her to appear to be under an obligation to keep me, and that propriety demanded that she should defer the favours she designed to do me, for which, however, he himself would become warranty. On the strength of this agreement I felt I could

re-embark. I followed the Cardinal, who took me by the hand and led me to the Princess. I cast myself at her feet, she raised me up immediately and embraced me, a favour which she had never shewn me, and which I took to be one of the conditions for which the skilful mediator had stipulated. Little was said on either side, but it was kindly enough and I re-entered on my ordinary duties.

Distaste for such episodes, joined to disgust at my condition, made me listen to sundry propositions for settling myself. A woman, who interested herself in me, told me that she knew in particular a man in business who by the aid of patronage could make an advantageous bargain, of which I should decide the reward. I spoke to M. de Valincourt. He saw this man, who wished with certain papers, from which he drew nothing, to purchase a post of receiver general of finance, which would be worth twenty thousand livres a year to him. He offered to marry me or to give me forty thousand francs if his affair throve. Despite its difficulty, M. de Valincourt undertook it to assure my fortune, which he had much at heart. He used the credit of his master, the Comte de Toulouse, with the Duc de Noailles, then head of the Council of Finances, to obtain what he demanded. I saw the man in question to

the end that I might judge of the best use I might make of his proposals. He seemed to me not at all above the average, save, perhaps, in the matter of economy. He was a widower with one child. I do not know how it came about, but he told me that he did not keep Lent because his son was too delicate to fast. This trait enabled me to judge of the comfort of his establishment, the which, joined to the dissimilarity which I found in other matters between him and myself, decided me to prefer his money to himself, after I had enquired with M. de Valincourt into all the delicacies of conscience and honour which were involved; he even consulted M. the Chancellor, whom he had already made privy to the affair, in order to gain the support of his authority.

The Duc de Noailles yielded readily to please the Comte de Toulouse, and wrote him a letter by which he accorded him his suit in favour of our man. There remained but the formalities to complete the affair, and I considered it settled, when the president requested a rendezvous of the Duchesse du Maine, in the middle of the night, to apprise her in the strictest secrecy that the Duc de Noailles was about to be dispossessed of his place in the finances and replaced by M. d'Argenson, who was also to have the seals, which were to be taken from the Chancellor. She

sent to call me on her return, and acquainted me with this secret, without knowing, however, the interest which I had cause to take in it and which she perceived not. Nevertheless I could not at that juncture have been apprised of anything more baleful for me than that news.

Despite all the reasons which I had to give warning of the change to M. de Valincourt, I kept the secret faithfully. It came out ere long through the unforeseen action of the public, and my affair failed beyond hope; it would have been worse had I been tempted to demean myself. M. de Valincourt, more disturbed than I was to behold my star overthrow two ministers at once, made overtures, at the risk of bringing down a third, to the new keeper of the seals, also one of his friends, to obtain for the man we had in hand an important post whence I might derive advantage. They gave him hopes of it; these, however, were totally annihilated by the events in which little by little I found myself involved. Here is a letter he wrote me on the subject some time before :

I send you the remaining Epistles of Seneca, and the Treatise on Benefits, translated by Malherbe. I beg you to keep them and add them to your library. If I had not still hope in M. the Keeper of the Seals

and in M. Paris, to whom I have written this morning, this present would have something the air of that which Massinisse made to Sophonisbe, in acquainting her that, since he was so unfortunate as to be unable to release her from slavery, he sent her the sole means she could use to deliver herself.

There being no longer anything afoot, Madame la Duchesse du Maine, who was more tranquil than she had been for a long time, made a journey to Sceaux, whither I could not follow her. Vexations and disquietudes had undermined my health, which gave way entirely. I remained in Paris, in a house which had been rented for Mademoiselle du Maine, near the Tuilleries, where she had no lodging. A chamber had been given me there, whither I went oftentimes to rest after dinner, beyond the reach of my noisy companions.

As soon as I could drag myself about, I went to join Madame la Duchesse du Maine at Sceaux, toward the end of her sojourn, which lasted but a month or six weeks. I was made sensible by this separation that the strongest tie one has with princes is that of custom : even that is easily broken, but is as easily resumed. At first I was like a stranger; at length I entered again into her good graces and caught up the thread of the

little intrigues which my retirement had made me lose.

We returned to the Tuilleries, and it was at this time that Madame la Duchesse du Maine yielded to the solicitations of the Marquis de Pompadour to see the Abbé Brigaut, and to hear the reading which he desired to give of a work entitled *Response to the Pretensions of Fitz-Morris*. This abbé claimed to be the author of it. It was a particular account of the intrigue of a cordelier who went into Spain to stir up there, as it was pretended, a great revolution in favour of M. le Duc d'Orleans; the latter most unjustly suspected the Cardinal de Polignac of having written this libel. The Abbé Brigaut was the confidential man of M. de Pompadour. He spoke of him to Madame la Duchesse du Maine as one capable of great things and trustworthy beyond suspicion. On this evidence she feared not to let him see her inclinations and hear the views which she held. This man threw himself into plotting either in the hope of raising himself from an indigent condition, or from taste, or from lack of employment. He was already involved in the affairs of the Pretender. This new object appeared to him more attractive, and he gave himself up to it without having tested his courage or his adroitness, which failed him at the first trial.

The Regent desired passionately at that time to conclude the treaty of the quadruple alliance, which had been made in England by the Abbé Dubois.

The Duc du Maine, on the first proposition of it to the Council of the Regency, opposed many reasons against it. The Duc d'Orleans, incensed with him, said on leaving the council : " M. du Maine is at length unmasked. " His opposition did not prevail. Nevertheless, he remained burdened with the hatred of the Regent, who, informed from other sources of the relations which Madame la Duchesse du Maine held with so many suspected persons, began to cherish great distrust of her. A dread of the difficulties they might stir up against him, joined to his aversion to the Duc du Maine, whom he believed, or feigned to believe, was a party to the machinations which were afoot, made him contemplate withdrawing the King from his charge. The enterprise was hazardous. The will of the late King was supported on this point by the decision of the same parliament which had conferred the Regency on himself, and by the Bed-of-Justice which had confirmed it. It seemed dangerous for him to invalidate these acts. The suspicions under which he had suffered should also have rendered him exceeding circumspect in tampering with measures taken for

the guardianship and surety of the person of the King. Nevertheless, encouraged by the Keeper of the Seals, d'Argenson, and by the Abbé Dubois, the one firm, and the other violent, he disregarded all these difficulties.

He laid his project before the Council of the Regency for authorization. No one opposed it but the Maréchal de Villeroi. He had adopted the profession of an honest man and sustained it worthily enough. To shew that he had in no wise assented to the degradation of the Duc du Maine, he shortly sought a pretext for writing to him, and filled his letter with all the titles of which that prince had just been despoiled.

M. and Madame la Duchesse du Maine were apprised that a tempest threatened them. The alarm was great; they were on their guard. At length, seeing nothing happen, they were reassured, and so entirely that Madame la Duchesse du Maine, on the festival of Saint-Louis, her fête-day, went to sup and sleep at the Arsenal, a common resort for parties of pleasure. There she learned early the next morning that all was prepared for a Bed-of-Justice, which the King was about to hold at the Tuilleries that very day. She returned thither with all speed. I had not accompanied her to the Arsenal. I heard at the same time of her return and of this strange news. I

could not see her for the first few moments; she employed them in conferring on the present situation with M. le Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse.

Parliament, according to the order it had received, met at the Tuilleries, which was invested with troops. The greater number of the magistrates exhibited a sufficiently gloomy countenance, but none gave any sign of energy. Everything went according to the Regent's wishes. The resolution which the Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse had taken, of retiring from the assembly as soon as they saw that they were to be the subjects of discussion, gave complete facility for the execution of that which had been concerted against the Duc du Maine alone. On frivolous pretexts he was deprived of the custody of the person of the King, and the superintendence of his education, which was given to M. le Duc, on a demand which he made by petition. And, on another petition from the Dukes, all acts in favour of the Princes and their children were revoked. They at once re-established the Comte de Toulouse alone in his enjoyment of his title and honours, according to the terms of the decree of 1717, alleging the services which the state had received from him and the satisfaction given by his conduct.

All these matters were executed without the

least resistance from any quarter. However, Parliament made a protest against what had passed at the Bed-of-Justice, but it did not appear. There are grounds for astonishment that M. le Duc du Maine made no attempt to maintain himself in a position which he occupied on so good a title. M. le Duc immediately put himself in possession of the apartments which the Duc and Duchesse du Maine occupied in the Tuilleries, which they ceded to him that same day. They took refuge in the Hotel de Toulouse. The horror of this flight, the precipitate removal, and still more the event which had brought it to pass, cast down my spirits to a degree I have never experienced on any other occasion. Madame la Duchesse du Maine sent me to Sceaux to look through her papers and burn all which might compromise her. I acquitted myself of this task so happily that, when they were seized some time afterward, there was nothing to find fault with in them. I returned in the evening to the Hotel de Toulouse and passed the entire night with Madame la Duchesse du Maine. Her condition cannot be described. It was a seizure, resembling a total deprivation of life, or as 'twere a lethargic slumber whence one is roused only by convulsive movements.

On the following day we all departed for Sceaux, where we remained, depressed in spirits. I

am lost in wonder to see how we render personal to ourselves all that concerns those to whom we are entirely devoted. I was three days and three nights without taking the least repose. My own misfortunes have never touched me so nearly. Beside our present troubles there remained a thousand subjects of disquietude. Ill fortune teaches us to fear. The letters from Spain, which I received from time to time from our Baron, might be intercepted, our dark plots discovered. We were all concerned for our safety, but the most disturbed was M. de Malesieu. The draft of that letter to the King of Spain which he had lost plunged him into an uneasiness he could not conceal. He imagined that some one had stolen it in order to lay it before the Regent. Nevertheless, he ceased not to seek for it; he asked me one day if I had not some knowledge of a paper written in his hand and that of the Cardinal de Polignac, and full of erasures, which had been taken from him. He did not explain to me what this document contained; and, as they had made a mystery of it to me, I knew not of what he was speaking. I assured him that I had neither seen nor heard of any paper such as he described.

Madame la Duchesse du Maine, after having been for some time in a condition in which every idea was suspended and all movement interdicted,

began to revive, and came at length to herself. Not daring to see suspected persons, and yet curious to know how they stood, she sent me secretly to Paris to converse with the Comte de Laval. I spent three hours *tête-à-tête* with him. He spread before me every imaginable chimera, demonstrated to me that the principal basis of their designs was the league of the North, of which there was much talk at that time, and the re-establishment of the Pretender in England, which latter event would destroy the main dependence of the Duc d'Orleans. Never were ideas more vast or less coherent! Our long conversation ended with reciprocal assurances that neither should pronounce the name of the other in case of imprisonment and interrogation. This prospect was familiar to us and made up at least the background of the picture.

As I was returning to Sceaux all alone, and on a very dark night, I was overset in the middle of my journey, where I remained for more than two hours, part of the time in a ditch, the remainder in a mill. At a time when one gave credit to presage, this one ought not to have been slighted.

I rendered to Her Highness the best account possible of the farrago which had been retailed to me. It was a pure effort of memory, for neither the sense nor the connection of ideas helped me

at all in the recital. She let no hope escape her, catching at each like a drowning man at a straw.

Madame la Duchesse du Maine, after having passed about two months at Sceaux in painful inaction, wished to return to Paris. She had no longer any habitation there. The necessity of looking for one was the reason or the pretext of the sojourn she made in the house which her daughter, the Princess, occupied. The desire of being within reach of hearing what was taking place was no doubt the chief reason.

The people who were bound to her by interest continued to push their point, and failed to perceive that it was too blunted to produce any effect. They scribbled pamphlets without end and but awaited the occasion to convey them to Spain. M. de Pompadour having written one which seemed to him a triumph, he wished to shew it to Madame la Duchesse du Maine. The promise which the Duc du Maine had exacted of her, to see none of the persons suspected of plotting, made her refuse the meeting which the marquis requested. He insisted upon the necessity of this interview because of the impossibility of finding any hand sufficiently safe to deliver the pamphlet in question. She consented at length that he should read it to her himself after having taken every precaution to prevent the meeting from

becoming known. Far from sanctioning the memoir, she considered it to be pernicious, and besought M. de Pompadour with instance not to send it; he appeared to yield to her reasons and wishes. She sent me, now and then, to carry letters to him which I always took care to see him burn in my presence.

Madame de Pompadour used often to say amid lamentations: "We have the most convincing and serviceable writings, but nothing can pass." Her husband and she fancied that they had found the most favourable opportunity in the world for sending everything to Spain: this was by the Abbé Portocarrero, a young man of two-and-twenty, who was returning thither. He had a chaise with a false bottom, where the papers were put and where they seemed to our friends to be in perfect security. The Comte de Laval apprised Madame la Duchesse du Maine of the fact in a note that he wrote to her. This princess, who was strongly opposed to so dangerous a mission, foresaw in an instant what would be the consequences of it.

They tried, in vain, to reassure her of the great prudence and discretion of this man in whom they had confided. It is true that the discovery of the papers he carried was not due to any fault of his. Every one knows that the secretary of the Span-

ish Embassy, in order to excuse himself for not keeping an appointment with a girl from the Community de la Fillon, told her that he had had so many despatches to make up because of the departure of the Abbé Portocarrero that he had not been able to go to her as they had agreed. This girl repeated it to the Superior, who, being on very friendly terms with the Regent, gave him the information, which she believed might not be a matter of indifference to him.

He gave orders at once to arrest the Abbé on the road and to seize whatever papers he carried. They overtook him at Poitiers, and, having taken possession of what they wished to obtain, they allowed him to continue his journey. He despatched immediately a courier to Prince Cellamare to acquaint him with what had happened; and this courier was so expeditious that he arrived a great while before the one who carried the same news to the Regent, the former arriving during the night. The prince had passed part of the night at table, in agreeable company, and had no great wish to spend the remainder in the examination of a disagreeable affair. It is even asserted that he was advised to defer the opening of the packet by a person who cared but little for affairs of State. However this may be, the ambassador had sixteen hours before he was arrested in

which to take his measures; which fact renders inexcusable his negligence in not destroying the papers that compromised the persons in league with him.

He sent the intelligence to the Comte de Laval, and despatched a hundred louis to the Abbé Brigaut, recommending him to depart secretly and without delay. This abbé was intimate with the Chevalier de Menil; he went to see him, told him he was going on a journey which, perhaps, might be a long one, and requested him to take charge of a box which he gave him, and in which he said were some family papers and his will. The Chevalier knew that the Abbé Brigaut had formerly made long journeys in the interest of the Chevalier de Saint-Georges; he fancied that this one concerned the same affairs and asked no questions. After this brief discourse, the Abbé quitted him in order to set out; and the next morning his maid-servant brought to the Chevalier de Menil a large packet of sealed papers which she said her master had charged her to deliver to him. He took it as he had done the box, without suspecting any deceit.

The afternoon of this very day, the 9th of December 1718, the Chevalier de Gavaudun, one of the first gentlemen of our household, entered my room. M. de Valincour was with me. He

said to us : " Here is a great piece of news. The Hotel of the Spanish Ambassador is invested, and his quarter is full of troops. No one knows as yet what is afoot. "

I was seized with terror; I endeavoured, however, to shew only surprise at the occurence before M. de Valincour, who knew not the share we had in it. Gavaudun was privy to it. He quitted us, having merely wished to apprise me of what had happened; M. de Valincour remained a long time with me discussing this event, at which he was greatly amazed. I do not know how he failed to perceive my agitation, which I could scarce conceal. I endured later a visit from the Abbé de Chaulieu, who kept me in the like constraint. The arrest of the Ambassador, and wildest conjectures as to the reason of it, made up again our whole conversation.

Madame la Duchesse du Maine had not less difficulty, on her side, in keeping up a good countenance in the midst of the people who were with her. Each one who arrived announced the news, added some circumstance, and talked of nothing else. She dared not escape from the troublesome crowd, for fear that they might find her manner anxious. She sent for me, however, to come for a moment to her dressing room, and asked if I had learned any particulars. I told her I

had heard but the public rumours, which had mightily alarmed me. They had her also, although she did not yet see whither they tended. She sent me to make certain investigations from which I brought back no light.

At length we learned that the papers carried by the Abbé Portocarrero had been taken, and that those of the Ambassador, whose arrest was owing to that cause, had also been seized. 'Twas then that we beheld ourselves plunged into the abyss from which there was no means of escape. The following day we knew that the Marquis de Pompadour and the Marquis de Saint-Geniez were in the Bastille. Two days later Madame la Duchesse du Maine was playing at *biribi,* as was her custom (she was attentive to change nothing in her manner of living), when a M. de Châtillon who held the bank, an austere man who was never known to talk, said :

" There is a prodigiously amusing piece of news. They have arrested and thrown into the Bastille, on account of this affair of the Ambassador of Spain, a certain Abbé Bri... Bri... "

He could not recall the name, and those of us who knew it had no desire to aid him. At length he finished, and added :

" What makes it so amusing is that he has confessed everything, and there are many people

who are mightily embarrassed in consequence. "

Then he burst out laughing for the first time in his life.

Madame la Duchesse du Maine, who had not the slightest inclination to do likewise, said :

" Yes, that is vastly amusing. "

" Oh ! it is enough to make one die of laughing ", returned he. " Picture those people who thought their affair a profound secret; and here comes one who tells more than is asked and names each by his name. "

This last fact threw the princess into the most cruel disquietude, and the more unexpected, because the Comte de Laval had sent her word that the Abbé had escaped, and all measures so well taken with respect to him that there was nothing to fear from that quarter. She endured to the end the distressing conversation of M. de Châtillon, without giving any sign of the painful emotions that agitated her. She recounted it to me during the night when I found myself again with her, and hid not from me her terror, which I could not dissipate, being too fully persuaded myself of the sad fate that was in store for her. They were making new arrests each day, and we but awaited our turn.

The Chevalier de Menil was also sent to the Bastille. The Abbé Brigaut, as I have said, had

placed his box and papers in his keeping. The Chevalier then suspected nothing. But, when he learned that they had arrested the Prince Cellamare for reasons of State, and knowing that the Abbé was in communication with him, he surmised, from his precipitate departure, that he might be involved in the same affair, and found himself mightily embarrassed by what he had received from the Abbé. He was not ignorant of the severity of the ordinances on this subject, but he preferred rather to expose himself to them than fail one who, without being his intimate friend, had trusted in him. He deemed it necessary, however, to enlighten himself as to the nature of the packet with which he had been charged. He opened the box adroitly and found nothing there, as the Abbé had told him, but his will and some papers equally innocent. He reclosed it so that the fact that it had been touched was not to be discovered, and then unsealed the roll of papers in which were all the schemes, memoirs, and all that had been written concerning the affair with Spain, of which he had no knowledge till that moment. He had not leisure to read so many various documents, but he saw enough, in running through them, to discover that there was nothing in them either against the King or the State; and, seeing the names of

many people of distinction who would be implicated in the affair were not this testimony against them destroyed, he took the resolution of throwing all of the papers into the fire.

There were several plots distinct from ours, which, without being associated together, all looked toward Spain, and had separate dealings with the Ambassador. Comte Daydie and Magni, who, at the first rumour, fled to Spain, had their separate cabal. The Duc de Richelieu, who was put into the Bastille a great while after, had his. Other nobles of the kingdom were also suspected of having conspiracies. Indications or proofs of all these intrigues were contained in the memorial of the Abbé Brigaut. The Prince Cellamare had made him privy to them all, or to nearly all.

The morning following the conflagration which the Chevalier de Menil had kindled, the Abbé Dubois, to whom he was very well known, and who was cognizant of his commerce with the Abbé Brigaut, sent for him and inquired of him what he had been able to learn of the affair in question. The Chevalier de Menil assured him that the Abbé had never discoursed to him on the subject, but owned that he had left in his hands a sealed casket, which contained nothing, according to what he had told him, but papers concerning his private affairs. He sent immediately for the casket, where

everything was found as in the first examination.

The Abbé Brigaut, in the meanwhile, whom the Ambassador had urged to depart, was making his way slowly along, mounted on a hired horse, and dressed as a cavalier. At the end of three days he reached Montargis, where some of the men whom

the Duc d'Orleans had despatched in every direction to arrest him seized him, finding him very like the description they had of his figure. He protested at first that he was not the person they were seeking, but several letters found upon him addressed to the Abbé Brigaut, of which he had not been attentive to rid himself, were evidence to which he had nothing to oppose. He was brought back along the same road to the Bastille much

more expeditiously than he had journeyed to Montargis.

Upon entering it, he was seized with consternation and shewed himself disposed to tell everything that one wished to know.

Messieurs d'Argenson and le Blanc, entrusted with the examination of this whole affair, came presently to interrogate him, and, as an opening to the conversation, told him that his maid servant was in the Bastille, and that the Chevalier de Menil had delivered to them what had been confided to him.

" Very well! " returned he, " since you have those papers, you know all, for there is nothing that is not there. "

This avowal, which corresponded so ill with what they had found in the casket, discovered to them that the Chevalier had made but a partial confession.

M. le Blanc sent for him and informed him of the statement of the Abbé Brigaut. M. de Menil assured him boldly that he had had no other paper of the Abbé's, and said that, in order to convince themselves, they had only to send at once and search his house. After having persisted for some time in this denial, and finding himself alone with M. le Blanc (the persons who accompanied him having withdrawn), he said to him :

" I am going, Monsieur, to converse with you, not as Minister of State and my judge, but as a gentleman who values the sentiments of honour. "

Having ended this little preface, he related simply and with no concealment what he had done and the reasons that had determined him thereto. M. le Blanc, affected by his confidence, told him that he could not without betraying his office keep the secret which he had just confided to him, but that he would commend his plain dealing and try to excuse his conduct to the Regent.

M. le Blanc retained him at his house, went on the instant to the Palais Royal, did indeed all that he could to palliate the action of the Chevalier de Menil, and would have succeeded in appeasing the Duc d'Orleans' anger against him, had not the Abbé Dubois, personally piqued at having been deceived, used his best endeavours to put him into the Bastille. He was conducted thither that very day despite the good offices of M. le Blanc and the solicitations of his friend Nocé, one of the Regent's favourites, who offered to keep him at his own house.

A certain Marquis de Menil of another family sought the Duc d'Orleans to assure him that he was neither relation nor friend to the Chevalier.

" So much the worse for you, Monsieur ", re-

plied the Regent; " the Chevalier de Menil is a gentleman. "

I had never heard of the Chevalier de Menil before I was told of his exploit and his imprisonment. Every one bestowed high encomiums on his generous proceeding. I listened to so many praises of him on this occasion that I was strongly prepossessed in his favour.

The Regent, in order to authorize and justify his violent conduct, had printed and distributed two letters from Prince Cellamare to Cardinal Alberoni, which had been seized in the packet the Abbé Portocarrero was carrying, together with the other documents sent by the Ambassador to His Eminence; at the head of these letters was printed:

To the end that the public may be informed upon what grounds His Majesty has taken the resolution of the 9th of the present month to dismiss Prince Cellamare, Ambassador from the King of Spain, and to order that a gentleman in ordinary of his household should accompany him to the frontiers of Spain, copies have been printed of two letters from this Ambassador to M. le Cardinal Alberoni of the 1st and 2nd of the present month, signed by the aforesaid Ambassador, and entirely written in his own hand, and without cipher.

At the end of these two letters, this announcement was subjoined:

When the service of the King and the precautions necessary for the safety and peace of the State will admit of the publication of the plots, manifestos, and memoirs cited in these two letters, the public shall know all the circumstances of the detestable conspiracy hatched by the said Ambassador to stir up a revolution in the kingdom.

Despite this promise, nothing farther was disclosed; but this attempt to aggravate the affair and to render it odious, the severity already shown to the greater number of the supposed criminals, forewarned us of the treatment that was in store for the principal persons concerned in it. We received several hints of this from other sources. Madame la Duchesse du Maine was warned positively through more than one channel that they were contemplating her arrest. She conversed of it to me during the nights and said that, to whatever place she was conducted, she should ask to have me accompany her. I desired it passionately. We thought then that, out of regard for her rank, she would be placed in some royal house with a fitting suite. It was not for us at that time to conceive of the harsh treatment which she suf-

fered. This idea of imprisonment did not alarm her too seriously; and she even jested about it with me, contriving plans to render her retirement, if not agreeable, at least supportable.

I was waiting this sad event when, one evening, more wearied than usual, I threw myself down on a couch in my room and fell asleep. In the midst of my slumber I felt myself pulled by the arm: I half opened my eyes and perceived through the dusk a woman, ill-dressed, whom I did not recognize. She said to me that her mistress had sent to apprise me that Madame la Duchesse du Maine was to be arrested that very night, that she had it from so sure an authority that there was no doubting it. This discourse aroused me wholly; I asked her several questions as to the particulars, which she knew not. I gathered nothing farther: I learned only that she had been sent by the Marquise de Lambert, to whom I was sincerely attached, and who was infinitely devoted to the interests of Madame la Duchesse du Maine, though she was not in her confidence concerning this affair.

I went immediately to find the princess and imparted to her the information I had received. It but confirmed the more what she had heard from other sources. She communicated it to the people about her who were most intimate and

best instructed in her secrets, and retained them to pass the night in her chamber, while waiting the moment of the catastrophe, which so little agitated her that she made many jests on the subject, wherein we joined; and this night of uneasiness thus passed very gaily. I took up a book that I found under my hand to hint to her to go to sleep. It was Machiavel's *Décades* with a mark in the chapter on Conspiracies. I shewed it to her. She laughed out, and cried:

"Remove that witness against us; it would be one of the strongest."

Our expectations were vain for the moment. The day came and advanced without our hearing anything. Some measures that remained to be taken forced the Regent to put off, for some days, the execution of his design. Madame la Duchesse du Maine, persuaded, however, that he would persist in it, purposed to write a memoir which she intended to leave for her mother, the princess, to engage her to demand, immediately on her arrest, that she should be brought to trial, knowing full well that there had been nothing criminal in her conduct and that the legal examination they would make into it would oblige the Regent to set her at liberty.

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